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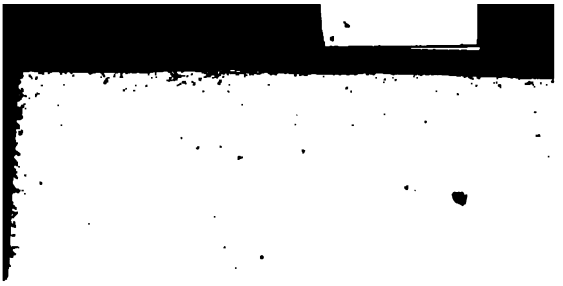

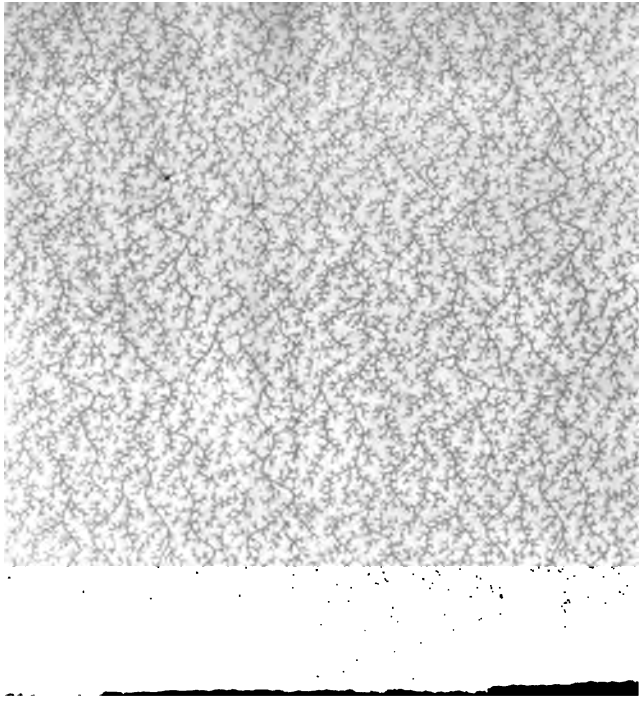

SHORT DISCOURSES

TO BE READ IN FAMILIES.

BY

WILLIAM JAY.

VOL. I.

"In every work regard the writer's end."

For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.—*Gen.* xviii. 19.

And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.—*Deut.* vi. 6, 7.

HARTFORD:

PRINTED FOR OLIVER D. COOKE.

HUDSON AND GOODWIN, PRINTERS.

1807.

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and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, young man, I say unto thee, arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother.—*Luke* vii. 12 to 15. *Page* 112

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P

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THE

PREFACE.

—MANY persons who maintain the worship of God in their houses, wish, occasionally at least, to blend instruction with devotion; but they are not able to deliver any thing of their own, nor can they easily avail themselves of satisfactory assistance from others.

We have commentators—but expositions are designed to be consulted, rather than read, and are calculated to aid sacred criticism, and promote a general knowledge of the scriptures rather than to enliven the exercises of social piety. We have also paraphrases—but these too often consist of a mere languid redundancy of words, which by pretending to illustrate, only oppresses and incumbers the sense, and generally serves no other purpose than to destroy the simplicity, weaken the force, and diminish the effect of the word of truth. "In the very best compositions of this kind," says a judicious writer, "the "gospel may be compared to a rich wine of high fla- "vor, diluted in such a quantity of water, as renders it "extremely vapid." Paraphrase is useful only in cases of obscurity, but the word of God, generally considered, is not hard to be understood. We do not apply the same censure to the reflections which are found at the end of the chapters or paragraphs, and which sum up their contents. These are often exceedingly valuable and useful: but it is easy to see that they are not very well adapted to the design before us. They are necessarily too refined in their coherence, too extensive in

their review, too general in their remark to leave a forcible impression on the minds of common readers or hearers.

—Sermons have been often employed, and many discourses have been published professedly for the use of families. But it has been remarked—That these discourses have not been distinguished from others, either in their length, their style, or their subjects. It has been asked—Is there no difference in circumstances between public worship and domestic devotion? It has been said—Let a minister place himself in a private family, and lead the morning or evening devotion, and he will soon find how unsuitable it would be to deliver in a parlour, a sermon which he had prepared for the pulpit.

Discourses to be used on such occasions as these should be short—not commonly surpassing ten minutes; never more than a quarter of an hour. As children and servants often form the greater part of the little assembly, and should never be overlooked—these addresses should be plain and apprehensible, not argumentative nor very paragraphical—they should be easy and natural, not elaborate, nor highly polished—they should be entertaining and interesting, not dry and soporific.

Hence they should shun the formality of method and numerous divisions; and abound with short and significant sentences, bold images, striking incidents, lively descriptions and characters. Two classes of scriptures would furnish perhaps the best foundations for these exercises. First, the *historical*, which holds forth the duties of religion in examples and instances. And secondly, the *figurative*, which explains divine things by resemblance. There is no better method of gaining the attention and of impressing the minds of children and common people, than teaching by comparison, or illustrating spiritual things by natural. It is needless to observe how much our Saviour's discourses abound with such allusions. Witness the prodigal son, the strayed

sheep, the mustard seed, the leaven, the lilies—all this made its way directly to the heart; it was impossible ever to forget it; his followers hung upon his lips; children cried Hosanna, and the common people heard him gladly.

In compliance, both with his own conviction, and the repeated solicitations of others, the author has ventured to undertake the present work. He does not affirm, however, that what he has done perfectly comes up to his wishes, or corresponds with the plan he has suggested. He found that it was easier to censure than to amend; to judge than to execute. But this he professes: he has attempted to be simple without being coarse, and to be intelligible to the illiterate without proving disgustful to the wise. He has labored to unite perspicuity with brevity, and in the small compass allowed him, to introduce a subject, and secure an effect. Frequently unable in a few pages to do justice to the various parts of a scripture, he has endeavored to seize some one prominent view of it, and to turn it into a source of consolation, a motive to holiness, a help to devotion. His aim has been to shew that faith is not a notion, but a principle; and to bring down religion from airy speculations into common life, that our piety may not be periodical, but keep us in the fear of the Lord all the day long. He wished to make christianity to appear lovely in its spirit, reasonable in its commands, rich in its motives and resources, and beyond expression kind and tender in its promises.

The wish of the author to engage particularly the attention of servants and children, will frequently appear in his manner. For such adaptations he makes no apology. Though he does not wish to indulge a bad taste, he would ever remember that a preacher ought to have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way. That which is too smooth easily slides off the memory; and that which is lost in the act of hearing will do little good. It is desirable——to get something that will *strike* and *abide;* something that recur-

ring again and again will employ the thoughts and the tongue; and if this cannot be accomplished in certain instances but by modes of address which perhaps are not so classically justifiable—should not a minister prefer utility to fame? Paul in his noble energy adds the comparative degree to the superlative, and calls himself less than the least of all saints. He invented new words, and used quaint ones. He could say "I have made "myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. "To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the "weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might "by all means gain some." If a child ran away and became profligate, a good father would be anxious to have him reclaimed; and if a person should go to him and say "I think I could prevail upon your son to aban-"don his unhappy course of living"—would such a father say, "O try, but see to it that you conform per-"fectly to every rule of good speaking;" or should he return and announce his success—would the father deem it worth while to ask "Did you dispose your ar-"guments quite logically, or make use of no obsolete "term, no trite phrase?"——"He that winneth souls "is wise." Yea more: "if a man err from the truth, "and one convert him, let him know that he who con-"verteth a sinner from the error of his ways shall save "a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins?" What a recompense!

—The circumstances of families are perpetually varying, and what is suitable seldom fails to impress. It was not possible however to accommodate a lecture to every supposable case; but the author has endeavoured to introduce a comprehensive variety, and hopes something will be found pertinent to all the more common and interesting occurrences. He has more than once noticed events of an afflictive nature; the heart is then soft and serious. He has improved the various seasons of the year. He has also provided subjects which are adapted to all the greater festivals. Members of the

established church may read these on the appropriated days, while Dissenters can surely have no objection to read at some time or other a few reflections on the birth or ascension of Christ. "One man esteemeth one day "above another; another esteemeth every day alike; "let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. "He that regardeth the day regardeth it unto the Lord; "and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he "doth not regard it.—Why dost thou judge thy broth- "er? Or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? "For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of "Christ."—

—SUCH was the prospectus by which the author, now nearly a year ago, announced the work he had undertaken. The circulation of the proposals occasioned from his friends a variety of hints concerning the plan. Some of these could not be regarded—but others have led to a little deviation from the original sketch—in two cases—The one respects the style; the other the length.

With regard to the former it was suggested—that in families where discourses of this kind were likely to be read, there were often youths of both sexes, of some education and improvement—that these formed a very important part of the object of such a publication—and therefore that the eye should not be too exclusively fixed on servants and children. In consequence of this, the author has paid a little more attention to the composition.

With regard to the other it was observed—that between an hour, and the time proposed, there were many intermediate degrees—and that those who had been accustomed to read discourses of the former length, would find the latter too disproportionably short. The author has therefore rendered some of these exercises a little longer, but as far as he can judge, none of them even

now, will take up more than twenty minutes. This circumstance has rather reduced the number of sermons.

After all, the author scarcely knows whether the alterations are improvements. He has found that if in the multitude of counsellors, there is safety, there is also perplexity. The work has been finished in a short space of time, under frequent indispositions, and many interruptions. It might have been much better executed. But all human productions are susceptible of endless improvement; and were an author to wait till his own mind is completely satisfied, he may linger in idle hope, till death—every moment hastening on—deprives him of all opportunity to serve his generation. The grand point at which we should aim is—to work while it is called to day, knowing that the night cometh, wherein no man *can* work—and to gain from the master, the sentence with which he defended and applauded Mary—*Let her alone—She hath done what she could.*

The author has not placed the discourses according to any principle of arrangement; but the index will enable the reader to find the subject suited to any particular purpose.

After publishing the prospectus, a much esteemed friend sent the author the following reflections, which he is persuaded he had never seen before. They are extracted from the Monthly Review, for May, 1800. In noticing "Family Sermons, by the Rev. E. Whita-" ker, Canterbury, three vols." the writer observes

"Prepossessed by the title of this work, we com-" menced our perusal of it with the flattering expecta-" tion of finding, what has indeed been long wanted; " viz. a set of sermons particularly calculated for the " use of families; or such as are proper for parents " and masters to read on Sunday evenings to their chil-" dren and servants. It is astonishing that amidst the " torrent of sermons continually issuing from the press, " there should scarcely be found any which answer this " description: but our clergy do not sufficiently consid-

"er that compositions calculated for the pulpit, are not "always adapted for the purposes above specified. In "our opinion, Family Sermons ought to be short, plain, "pious, and practical. They should not tire by length, "nor perplex by profundity. The plain truths of the "christian religion, the social and personal virtues, "should be their subjects, and these should be treated "with a view to practical application, rather than to "learned explanation.

"Our modern sermons are considerably shorter than "those of the last age, but they are still too long for do- "mestic use. Children and servants are soon tired of "listening to admonitions; and when languor prevails "the mind ceases to be in a proper state to receive in- "struction. Above all things, therefore, he who com- "poses Family Sermons, should avoid prolixity and dry "argumentation. He should endeavour to put himself "in the situation of a sensible and well-disposed mas- "ter of a family, who wishes to embrace the opportu- "nity afforded on the Sunday evening, of inculcating "on those under his care and authority, the lessons of "religion and virtue. Such a man, in making such an "attempt, would select no subject of controversy, would "discover no desire of display, but would strive with "all brevity, affectionately and piously to address their "plain understandings, consciences, and feelings."

The author has inserted this paragraph because there is such a remarkable coincidence of reflection, and because by such an authority he would strengthen his own opinion. He apprehends there is only one article in which the work now introduced will be found to differ from the plan recommended above. And it is this. He has brought forwards, sometimes more fully and distinctly, and oftener still by connexion and implication, subjects which the conductors of this celebrated review may consider as too much partaking of the controversial, and speculative, which they would entirely exclude from such a performance. But the author is

satisfied, not only of the truth, but of the impor
these doctrines: he has seen their beneficial i
particularly exemplified; and he is persuaded
culcation of them is necessary to ministerial use
And as he has written from conviction, and has
ed himself without censoriousness, he expects fi
partiality, the same candor with which notwiths
difference of sentiment his former works have l
ceived.

Lower East-Hayes,
June, 1805.

AN

ADDRESS

TO

MASTERS OF FAMILIES.

MASTERS OF FAMILIES,

YOU have often heard, and perhaps always admired the resolution of Joshua. He had gathered all Israel together in Sechem—and thus he addressed them. *If it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord; choose you this day whom ye will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house we will serve the Lord. This determination derives a considerable force from the person who forms it.*—It was Joshua. But who was Joshua? A soldier, a hero, a commander in chief of the armies of the living God, the governor of Israel, the principal man in the state. He it was, who in the presence of an assembled country, was not ashamed to say, *as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.*

And does religion degrade talents, tarnish dignity, disparage greatness? It ennobles titles, and adds lustre

God in our own souls—can secure us. *Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?* And indeed those who are regardless of their own souls, are not likely to be very attentive to the souls of others. Mere profession, and a regard to decency, may carry you some way—but there is nothing like a personal experience of divine things to enflame zeal. Unless you serve God yourselves, your efforts will be transient, partial, irregular. They are also likely to be unsuccessful. A drunken master is a poor preacher of sobriety to servants. A proud father is a miserable recommender of humility to children. They will do as you do, rather than do as you say. Your example will counteract all the effect of your council; and all the convictions you would fix in the mind, will bound off like arrows from an impenetrable shield.—*Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?*

You should therefore begin *both to do and to teach.* You should be able in a humble measure at least to say to those who are under your care, *be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.* Personal religion must precede domestic—therefore Joshua does not say *my house* shall serve him *without me.* But domestic religion must accompany personal—and therefore Joshua does not say *I* will serve him *without my house:* he includes both.

And thus, finally, the determination *is relative, and extensive:* as for *me and my house, we will serve the Lord.*

But the question is—How could he say this? Could he be answerable for his family, as well as for himself? We may consider this two ways—as expressing either his happiness or his duty.

If he could say this from a knowledge of his family—if after observation he was assured of the good and pious dispositions of all those who are under his care—we should say he was a happy man indeed! This has sometimes been the case, but the privilege is not common.

The words therefore are rather to be considered as an expression of his duty. Not that he supposed it was in the power of his resolution to make the members of his household truly pious. He knew that God alone is the author of conversion—but he knew also that God uses means, and requires us to use them: that it is only in the use of them he has promised his blessing—and therefore that it is only in the use of them we can expect it. Were we to hear a pious husbandman saying, "this year I will have wheat in *this* field, and *yonder* I "will have barley,"—you would not mistake him. He does not mean to intimate that he can produce the grain, but he can manure and plough, and sow, and weed—he intends to do this—and then to look for the Divine Blessing to give the increase.

Thus Joshua resolves to endeavour in the wise and zealous use of all proper means to render the family he governs truly religious. He would instruct, reprove, admonish, encourage them. He would address every principle of action; every passion in their bosoms. He would seize every favorable opportunity, improve every striking occurrence to impress the mind with seriousness. He would cherish every promising appearance. He would lead them to the house of God, and keep them from profaning his holy day. He would pray not only *for* them, but also *with* them: and worship God, not only in the closet but in the parlour, and with his children and servants in the train.

And this, O ye masters of families—is that which I wish to enforce upon you all. O! that I could find out acceptable words as well as words of truth! O! that I knew by what arguments I could induce you to establish *the worship of God* in your own houses!

To render our reasoning upon this subject easy of apprehension and remembrance, let me call upon you to consider domestic religion in reference to God—in reference to yourselves—and in reference to your families.

I. Think of it in *reference to God.* To him family religion has a three-fold relation. The first is a relation of *responsibility.* For we are required to glorify God in every condition we occupy, and in every capacity we possess. For instance. If a person be poor, he is commanded to serve God as a poor person—but suppose he should become rich: he would then be required to serve him as rich; and from the time of his acquiring this wealth, he would be tried by the rule of wealth. If a man be single, he is commanded to serve God as single; but no sooner is he placed over a family, than he is required to serve God as the master of a family: and from the moment of his obtaining this new connexion, he will be judged by the duties which belong to it. God has committed to him a trust, and he expects him to be faithful to this trust. He has given him a talent, and he expects him to use this talent. In a word he has made him a steward, and he will call him to give an account of his stewardship. When so to speak the man has been tried, then comes forth to be judged the master of the family?—Bring forth the law of the house——Have you walked by *this* rule?—What have you done for me *here?*—Nothing! Did I not assign you the government of a family: and to qualify you for this very purpose did I not give you a peculiar authority and influence? How have you employed them?—Anticipate the proceedings of this awful day, and *judge yourselves that you may not be condemned with the world.*

The second is a relation *of gratitude.* How numerous and pressing are your obligations to his kindness and his care? He has crowned your wishes, and supplied all your wants. When you were a poor, solitary, *insignificant individual,* he raised you into consequence, *and multiplied you into* a family. Behold, thy wife

like a fruitful vine, by the sides of thy house; and thy children like olive plants round about thy table. Whose *secret has been upon thy tabernacle?* Whose providence has *blessed the labor of thy hands?* Whose vigilance has suffered *no evil to befall thee, nor any plague to come nigh thy dwelling?* And will you basely refuse him the glory which is due unto his holy name? Will you refuse to honor him in a family in which he has scattered so many blessings? Shall thy house which should be the temple of his praise, be only the grave of his mercies?

The third is a relation of *dependence.* For can you dispense with God in your dwellings? Are not all your schemes, your exertions, and the assistances you secure, *less than nothing, and vanity,* without his aid and his blessing? *Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it. Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep.* The wisest course therefore is to secure his favor, who has all events under his controul, and *is able to do for us exceeding abundantly, above all we ask or think.* And is this to be done by irreligion?

Observe his promises, and his threatenings. Or rather let us observe *one* of them. *The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked: but he blesseth the habitation of the just.* What a dreadful look has this scripture towards a wicked family! What a benign aspect towards a righteous one! What a tremendous thing is *the curse of God:* and this does not hover over the building, does not look in at the window, does not stand at the door—but is *in the house*; spreading through every apartment, and feeding like a worm upon all the possessions. You may see the appearance of pleasure, and as you draw nigh, you may *hear music and dancing* —but *there is no peace saith my God, unto the wicked.* Magnificence may reign there; there may be rich furniture, and a table spread with dainties—but what are

all these when the divine anger has said, *let their table be made a snare, a trap, and a stumbling block, and a recompense unto them.* And if this be the case with their good things—what will they do in the evil day? What can be expected under their disappointments, and afflictions, but impatience, and rage, and despair.

But he *blesseth the habitation of the just:* and his blessing with bread and water is a good portion. If they have but little, it is sanctified. Their enjoyments are relished. Their trials are alleviated. Religion opens a refuge, when every other refuge fails, and applies a remedy to evils, otherwise remediless. They have a God in trouble; his grace is still the more; and his providence is making all things work together for their good. Their walls are continually before him. The voice of rejoicing, and of salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous! This brings you

II. To consider family religion *in reference to yourselves.*

And here in the first place you ought to be concerned for your spiritual welfare: you ought to value that which has a tendency to restrain you from sin, and to excite you to holiness. Now it is easy to see that the practice we are recommending has such an influence. Can he who is going to prayer with his family, swear or scold?—Why—he will be upon his guard, if it be only to preserve himself from the charge of hypocrisy. Another feels no such motive: he can indulge himself in bad words, and vile tempers, without incurring the reflection of inconsistency. And because he makes no pretensions to virtue, he may imagine himself at liberty to practise vice.

And upon this principle it is that many refuse to make a profession of religion—to come to the table of the Lord—and to adopt family worship. They reason properly enough—that in consequence of this they must become more watchful, and circumspect. But what can we think of the principle? What can we think of

a man who fears to be restrained from the commission of sin, and to be urged to the performance of duty?

Such a practice also will secure tranquillity of mind. The omission of this duty leaves a sting in the conscience, occasions many a bitter reflection through life, and plants a dying pillow with thorns. When you see those who were placed under your care, going astray, becoming the victims of error, and vice, and misery, it will not be easily in your power to suppress the rising, or to soothe the painful accusation, "Ah! this might "have been prevented, had you discharged your duty. "Does not their destruction lie at your door?" But the man who has faithfully discharged his obligation, feels an internal composure. If indeed his efforts be not crowned with success, he will lament, but this grief differs very materially from that torture which springs from self-condemnation, for a trust betrayed, for opportunities neglected, for exertions omitted. He has a satisfaction under all his distress: and his rejoicing is this, the testimony of his conscience that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not by fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God he has had his conversation in the world, and more abundantly towards his own family.

But surely you are not indifferent to your temporal circumstances. You wish to have peace and order in your dwelling: you wish to have your property secured, and your business well performed: you wish to see fidelity, diligence, submission; you wish to be honored and obeyed. But do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Surely you cannot expect these things to be produced without principle—and what principle can so certainly and fully produce them as religion—what else can enforce them by sanctions, and motives, so awful, so binding, and which operate equally in all places and at all times?—and thus secure the performance of duty, when you are absent as well as present? By teaching them to regard God, you teach them to regard yourselves. Piety is the firmest basis on which to *build morality.*—To which we may add that when re-

ligion is fairly exemplified in character, there is a majesty, and a force in it: it surrounds the possessor with an awe that represses a thousand impertinences, and extorts respect. *Abraham commanded his children and his household after him*—and what a son had he in Isaac; what a servant in Eleazar!

Let us therefore consider this subject, III. *In reference to your family.* The members which compose it, are in reality parts of yourselves; children are natural parts, and servants are civil parts of yourselves. These have therefore peculiar claims upon you, and were you to avow that you had no regard for them, and would do nothing that could advance their welfare—what would people think of you? If in the cold you denied your servants warmth, if you gave them bad food, and short allowance; if you turned them out of doors as soon as they were sick, and they knew not where to lay their head—the world would cry—"you wretch!" If you were to suffer your children to go naked, to beg their bread, to perish with hunger in a ditch, or to take your little ones, and dash them against the stones—you would be shunned as a monster. But you act a far more criminal, and a far more infamous part, by disregarding their spiritual and everlasting welfare. Doubtless Herod after killing the infants in Bethlehem, was viewed and shunned with horror—but he was far less cruel than you: he only destroyed the body, you damn the soul: he only slew the children of others, but you murder your own!—*If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.* And can you imagine you have done this when you have endeavoured to answer the question, *what shall they eat, and what shall they drink, and wherewithal shall they be clothed?* What is the body to the soul; what is time to eternity? You may amass for them riches, you may leave them an estate, but your house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.

Under this article, let us observe more distinctly, t
things.

The first is the importance of religion to the indivi
uals under your care. Is it not *the one thing needfu*
Is it not *profitable to all things? having promise of*
life that now is, and of that which is to come?—You ca
not deny this. Can you then be indifferent to the re
gion of your offspring, without being indifferent to th
welfare? While you say by your practice that it is n
thing to you whether they be pious or vicious—do y
not at the same time, and in the most undeniable ma
ner declare—that it is nothing to you whether they
respectable or infamous, loved or abhorred of Gc
saved, or lost for ever?

And the second is this—the probability of their l
coming religious by your means. Baxter gives it
his opinion that if family religion was duly attended
the public preaching of the word would not long be t
common method of conversion. Without adopting tl
sentiment in all its extent, we may observe that there
certainly enough to encourage the heads of families
exert themselves, and to condemn them if they do n
If the crop be so valuable, who would not sow, esp
cially if he could *sow in hope?* And who knows n
the force of early impressions, and the strength of ea
habits? Who has not read, *Train up a child in the w*
that he should go, and when he is old, he will not depc
from it. In such families there has generally bee
seed to serve the Lord. And this has appeared n
only in children: for how often have servants had re
son to say, "blessed be God that ever I entered th
"family: there were the eyes of my understandi
"opened, and there were my feet turned into the w
"of peace."

MASTERS and Parents, I have thus endeavored
bring into a small compass the arguments for the wc
ship of God in your families. On a subject so fi

quently discussed, novelty was not to be expected—but I hope that what has been said, will be found sufficient to convince your judgment, and determine your practice.

I cannot conclude the address without lamenting that there is so little attention paid to family worship, in a country professedly christian, and in a period supposed to witness an increase of godly zeal. There is no more religion in the families of some who pretend to believe the scripture, than there would be if they were Atheists. To see many attending so regularly and frequently the preaching of the gospel, would lead to a conclusion, or at least a hope, that they were the true worshippers of God, but when we follow them home to their own dwellings, we find them no better than heathens. Heathens! Forgive me this wrong—I blaspheme you by the comparison: you had your household gods, which you daily worshipped, and which nothing could induce you to resign.—I only ask you to be consistent. If you are christians, *be* christians. If you are Israelites, be Israelites *indeed!*

It may be asked whether we imagine that there is any *peculiar* deficiency with regard to family devotion in *our day?* And to this we readily answer, we are persuaded there is: and it appears both in the frequent neglect, and the superficial performance of it especially contrasted with the commonness of profession, and the frequency of public ordinances. We wish to speak freely, but without meaning to give offence. It is easy to see in the lives of our good old forefathers, what a value they set upon the morning and evening worship of God in their houses. With them it was an object, and an object of first-rate importance: they entered upon it with seriousness and preparation: they arranged their worldly business, and their houshold affairs in a subserviency to it: *public* worship did not exclude it, or drive it up into a corner. But of late years an undue stress has been laid on public exercises; and opportunities of hearing have been so multiplied, as to produce a *kind of religious dissipation*—so that persons of a reli-

gious character, as well as persons of a worldly, are seldom at home; there is some entertainment every evening in the week; and every hour of the sabbath. And hence there is very little inclination or time for family duty. It is so much easier to go and lounge in a place of worship, and hear some new performer, than to retire into the closet to examine the heart, and call together a family, and endeavor to instruct and impress them, that we cannot help wondering how it was ever possible for the former to be looked upon as a greater test of piety than the latter!—God forbid that we should decry public worship, or the preaching of the word, he has commanded us *not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is*—but that man is surely under a mistake who thinks to please God by incessantly running from one public opportunity to another, while he leaves his children to run wild, to grow up in ignorance, and to profane the sabbath.

I have stated the case strongly, but where this evil does not prevail in the extreme, it operates in the degree, and I cannot help sincerely wishing that the cause of the complaint could be removed. It is very desirable that useful bodies of men should be rendered more useful, and this in the case before us could be easily done, if those who have the lead would more strenuously inculcate the importance of family religion, and regulate the length and frequency of their public services accordingly.

There is another thing which because it has a relation to the subject before us I notice. Of late years a considerable number of persons not in the ministry have been stimulated to go of a Saturday evening, or a Sunday morning into the towns and villages as occasional preachers. The motive was laudable, but it has also contributed to the effect we have deplored: families are thus frequently bereaved of their head on the sabbath —and who knows not that the sabbath is the principal day in which men of business can be much in a religious *sense with their families?* I hardly know how to cen-

sure this—and I do not in every instance. But it may be well to ask, whether God ever calls us to a course which requires us to neglect or violate those duties which he has enjoined in his word? In a general way the ministry requires a man's whole attention. And when Providence has furnished the means of a respectable introduction to the office by institutions for improvement, it is a duty to avail ourselves of them.

But to return. Let me beseech masters of families with all imaginable importunity not to think this practice a matter of indifference which they are at liberty to perform or neglect. It is a duty; it is a duty of unspeakable importance. Do not therefore put it off longer—begin this very evening, and before you lie down in your beds honor God in your families.

—"We have not time!" But what time does it require? Out of four and twenty hours cannot you furnish a few moments for God, or rather for yourselves? Would you think that time lost which is best employed? "There is nothing got by stealing, "or lost by praying." Surely if you have no time at present, you could redeem a little by order, by economy, by diligence. To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heavens.

"But I have not capacity!" Have you ever fairly made the trial?—Would not your ability increase by exercise!—Is it not a want of inclination rather than of power? "Where there is a will there is a way." And this would be the case here: for you would find that if incapable of leading the devotion of the family extemporaneously, you could furnish yourselves with excellent forms; and it is to be lamented that prejudice should ever preclude the use of them when it is needful.

"But—I have neglected it so long that I am asham-"ed to begin!" You ought to be ashamed of sin, but not of duty. You ought to be ashamed that you have lived so long without it, but you ought not to be ashamed that you are wiser and better than you once were.—*Again. You say,* "*if*"——But I will answer no more

ur objections. They are only excuses—and you —yes you know—that they do not satisfy your consciences now, and will avail you nothing in the and terrible day of the Lord.

t some of you live in the habit of family worship. l not therefore be amiss to conclude with a few s by way of direction.

spiritual in the performance. There is great r of formality, where things customarily return, rith little possibility of variation. Think of God. mber with whom you have to do—and what you to do with him.

not confine family worship to prayer. Include eading the scripture, and if possible singing the s of God.

short. A few minutes of simple and affectionate ion is far better than eking out nearly half an hour ubling over the name of God, telling the Supreme g what he is, and by vain repetitions.

early. Do not leave it till the family are drowsy tupid.—But here a case of conscience occurs, and alas! as the inconsistencies of the present day d render too common. "When should those of have family worship who attend public amuse- nts; for instance—the theatre." I answer, by all s, have it *before you go*. When you return it will te; and you may not feel yourselves quite so well ted towards it. We have known professors who always omitted it when they came home from the house. Besides, if you have it before, you can ore the divine blessing; beseech God to be with ; and to assist you in redeeming time, in overcom- he world, in preparing for eternity.

eader! You may imagine that the author has en this with a smile, but he has written it with shame grief. He earnestly wishes that many would adopt ly worship—but he is free to confess that there ome of whom he should be glad to hear that they *laid it aside*.

DISCOURSE I.

RETURNING FROM A JOURNEY.

Thou shalt know that thy tabernacle shall be in peace; and thou shalt visit thy habitation, and shall not sin.—Job v. 24.

IN the scripture *God hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence.* There is a suitableness in it to every character, and to every situation in life. It cautions youth, and it sustains age; it soothes the poor and it humbles the rich. It is equally useful whether we are in a state of solitude or society. It teaches us how to behave ourselves in every connection we form, and in all the circumstances through which we pass. The words which I have read may be considered as a promise made to a good man—"with regard to his absence from home." When he goes a journey at the call of providence, he may leave all his concerns with the Lord whom he serves, for he will sustain him, and suffer no evil to befall him nor any plague to come nigh his dwelling.

The person to whom this promise is made is supposed to have a house. It is called a *tabernacle*, and it is so named in allusion to the houses of the Easterns, which, especially in the days of Job, were principally tents or tabernacles to enable them to move the more easily from place to place, in feeding their flocks and herds. Abraham is commended for not building a fixed mansion, but reminding himself even by his external circumstances that he was a stranger and a sojourner as were all his fathers, and that there is none abiding—*By faith he sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange*

country dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise : for he looked for a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God. And would it not be well for us to view our abode however pleasing or durable it may appear as only a temporary residence—a shelter of accommodation for a traveller. " Soon shall I be called to leave this dwel- " ling—I am going the way of all the earth—soon shall " I ascend these stairs for the last time, and in this bed " I shall soon close mine eyes to sleep till the heavens " be no more."—David therefore calls his palace *the tabernacle of my house.*

However plain the building may be, it is a mercy to have a house to live in. To be homeless is a condition the most pitiable. Let us think of Cain expelled from the presence of the Lord, *a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth.* Let us think of those whose doom David does not implore but foretel ; *let his children be continually vagabonds and beg ; let them seek bread also out of their desolate places.* Let us think of those good men who *wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.* Of the apostles who could say *we have no certain dwelling place ;* and above all of our Lord and Saviour who, *while foxes had holes and the birds of the air had nests, had not where to lay his head.* Let us think of all this and be thankful to the kindness of providence for a *tabernacle* to which human skill has added so many conveniences and comforts. Hence springs the powerful idea of home, to which the wandering tribes in savage countries are strangers. We insensibly acquire a love to inanimate things, and derive no little pleasure even from local prejudices. Who can feel indifferent to a place where he received his birth—where he passed his days of infancy, and indulged in the diversions of youth—where his body has been so often refreshed with sleep, and skreened from piercing cold and descending torrents, and where he has shared so many social joys, from conversation and books around the friendly fire, or in the adjoining garden !—*Home has a thousand attractions.*

But dear as it is we must sometimes leave it. In these cases indeed we should always remember the intimation of the wise man, *as a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place.* Persons who have families and callings should not be too frequently nor too long from home; it will cherish a roving disposition, multiply expence, injure those affairs which require inspection, and produce a nameless train of evils. But sometimes journies are necessary; business may call a man abroad; friends and relations may live at a distance; health may require a change of scene; and so of the rest. Now when God calls us abroad he will take care of us, and we may hope to find the old proverb true, "the path of duty is the path of safety."

Hence he is reminded of the welfare of his house and family in his absence. Thou shalt know that thy tabernacle *is in peace.*

Peace means prosperity. *Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord that walketh in his ways—for thou shalt eat of the labor of thy hands; happy shalt thou be and it shall be well with thee.* The Lord can keep off disease; he can render business successful; he can afford every needful supply. What peace can there be while children are crying for food and there is none to give them? But *fear the Lord all ye his saints for there is no want to them that fear him. The young lions do lack and suffer hunger, but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.* Suppose they have not so much as others —Phillip Henry tells us that "the grace of God will "make a little go a great way;" and David tells us that *a little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked.*

Peace is harmony. There can be no happiness in a family among the members of which are found reserve, suspicions, bickerings, contentions. *Where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.* What is pomp without concord? what is abundance without union and attachment? *Better is a dinner of herbs where love is than a stalled ox and hatred therewith:* bet-

ter is a dry morsel with quietness therewith than a house full of sacrifices with strife. It has been said that quietness under a man's roof is only exceeded by one thing, viz. quietness in his conscience. But O *how good and how pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity*—where all move in concert, mutually attentive to serve and please, exchanging nothing but tender affections and kind offices !

How pleasant 'tis to see,
Kindred and friends agree,
Each in their proper station move,
And each fulfil his part,
With sympathising heart,
In all the cares of life and love !

Peace is preservation. To how many disasters is a family exposed if God withdraws his protection ! A great wind may come and smite the four corners of the house, and it may fall and bury us in the ruins. A man may start up from his bed and hear within the noise of thieves and robbers seizing his property and threatening his person. At midnight when deep sleep falleth upon man he may be awakened by the cry of fire, and see the flames consuming his substance and not leaving an avenue by which to carry off his babes—What a blessing is it to have a tabernacle in peace !

Nor shall the tabernacle only be preserved, but the owner too. *And thou shalt visit thy habitation and shalt not sin.* It is a mercy when we go from home to come back alive and well ; for though we are too little sensible of it, we always travel in jeopardy. Let us reflect.—We might have been robbed and terrified by wicked and unreasonable men. We might have been groaning under the pain of bruised limbs and broken bones. Our lives might have been spilt upon the ground, and we might have died among careless and mercenary strangers, and our friends have received the *sad intelligence* broken to them by degrees,—that we *were—no more.*

And surely for all this God expects from us something better than *sin*. But a man would sin in this case if he visited his habitation without thankfulness, and did not fall down and adore the *preserver of men*. He would sin if his gratitude was not lively and practical and *by the mercies of God* he did not present his *body a living sacrifice*—and resolve to walk within his *house with a perfect heart to set no wicked thing before his eyes, to hate the works of them that turn aside*—to watch over his conversation and to guard his temper—and to flee passion and pride and *the love of money which is the root of all evil*—to be satisfied with his lot and resigned under his trials—to behave towards his servants as one that has *a master in heaven*—to train up his *children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*, ruling well his own house *after a godly sort*—that God may derive a revenue of glory not only from himself but from his family.

—He would sin also did he not confide in him in future more simply and firmly—for God by these instances of his attention and proofs of his faithfulness, solicits us to trust in him, commands us to give up our fears, and says *cast all your care upon me for I care for you.*

Let us observe one thing more and conclude. Domestic piety crowns domestic peace. It should be our daily prayer when we go out and when we come in, *Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.* In all our employments and in all our enjoyments to be preserved from sin is the greatest privilege, it should therefore be our greatest concern. Sin is a dreadful thing, for it is always the attraction of wrath. *The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked; but he blesseth the habitations of the just. The house of the wicked shall be overthrown; but the tabernacle of the righteous shall flourish.* Let us keep sin out of our dwellings and say with Joshua *as for me and my house we will serve the Lord*—and neighbors and angels and God will say, *the voice of rejoicing and of salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous. Peace be both to thee and to thine house, and peace be unto all that thou hast.* Amen.

DISCOURSE II.

GOD THE BEST OF FATHERS.

If ye being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him.—Matt. vii. 11.

THE parental relation is a very familiar and a very instructive one. It is therefore often employed to hold forth the union between God and his people. But while it aids our conception, it cannot do justice to the subject. Man from whom our idea of this relation is taken, is *evil;* whereas our *Father which is in heaven is perfect.* Defects appear in the dispositions and actions of every earthly father, but when the Supreme Being assumes the character of a parent, he fully exemplifies it—He does *much more* than was ever seen, ever heard of in this relation before. And hence according to our Saviour, we may learn as much from the difference, as from the resemblance in this striking comparison. Let us then see how pre-eminently he sustains the parental office, and learn thereby the happiness of his children.

The first instance of superiority is derived from knowledge. Men know not always what is good for their offspring. Sometimes they ignorantly yield to their wishes, and in effect give them stones instead of bread, and serpents instead of fish. Not knowing sufficiently their talents and dispositions they may place them in a line of business which will embarrass or ensnare them, instead of one in which they would appear to advantage. From the same principle they may advise them to form *connections which* would prove their vexation through

life, or hinder them from unions which would complete their happiness. They may not know how to approach their minds most successfully by instruction; to fix them if volatile; to give them confidence if timid.—By checking, they may chill, and by indulgence, they may not only encourage but dissipate.—All these disadvantages necessarily arise from our defective knowledge.

But our Heavenly Father is the only wise God. His understanding is infinite; and it is our happiness that he knows what we really need; knows when to refuse, and when to yield; and so arranges our circumstances in life, as to make *all things work together for our good.*

The second instance of superiority is derived from correction. It is thus that the apostle distinguishes between *fathers of our flesh*, and *the father of spirits. They verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure*, often from whim and caprice, from fretfulness and passion, to relieve their feelings rather than to comply with their convictions. Hence if they did not rebuke us at the very moment of provocation they could not do it at all; whereas if they had been concerned for our welfare the reason for correction would have remained when the irritation had subsided.—*But he for our profit that we might be partakers of his holiness.* There is no tyranny in God; there are no uneasy sensations in him. If he afflicts, it is—not from passion but principle, and this principle looks only to the advantage of his children.

We may also err on the other side: we may be too soft to the faults of our offspring, and our tenderness may degenerate into foolish fondness. Eli is an awful example of this. *His sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.* It is said also of Adonijah that his father David *had not displeased him at any time in saying why hast thou done so?*—A fine father truly!—But it is cruel to connive where we should punish; *he that spareth the rod hateth his son.* And God regards the soul, and will not sacrifice our profit to our feelings. *If our welfare requires it*, he will frown, or withhold the

tokens of his love, or shut us up for a time, or smite us, and severely too: nor let us think hardly of his dealings with us since it is written *blessed is the man whom thou chasteneth O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law.*

Behold a third instance in which God surpasses every earthly parent. They cannot be always with their children so as to attend to their circumstances. They sleep, and are unable to watch over them. They are employed, and business draws them off, and occupies all their thoughts. They journey, and leave their little ones behind them with many an anxious feeling. There is an age when their children go from them. School or trade calls them away from home, and they are no longer under the eye of their natural guardians. It was well for the little Shunamite when seized in the field that he had a father by—he said unto *his father, my head, my head!* Joseph would have been preserved from the rage of his brethren, in the plain of Dothan, had his venerable father been there—but in vain he looked—and called—no father was nigh.

But here it is otherwise. If we are the children of God we are never out of his sight—*He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous.* He who keepeth them *never slumbers nor sleeps.* Though he governs worlds, he attends as much to each individual as if nothing else engrossed his care. And wherever we go there is he. Jeremiah found him in the dungeon: Daniel in the lion's den; John in the isle of Patmos; and Jonah and Paul in the deep: *yea,* says David, *though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.*

Fourthly. Parents may be unable to relieve their children if with them. I pity the mother whose ears are assailed with the cries of half fed babes, when alas she has no more to give them. I feel the situation of poor Hagar; her bread consumed, and the bottle of water spent—what could she do—*she cast the child under one of the shrubs*—and *she went and sat her down over against him, a good way off, as it were a bow-shot:*

for she said—let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over against him, and lifted up her voice and wept. By faith Moses when he was born was hid three months of his parents because they saw he was a proper child—and what could they do more? They make him a *little ark of bulrushes, and daub it with slime and with pitch*—*and lay it in the flags by the river's brink*—one thing more is possible—*his sister stood afar off to wit what will be done to him.* And here providence took up the business or what had become of the poor helpless infant? We read in the gospel of *a certain nobleman whose son was at the point to die*—and what in this case could titles and riches do for him? Nothing; he therefore goes abroad in search of aid. O, I sympathize with the father who hears from the physician the sad hint—Sir I can do nothing more for the child—entering the room we behold him standing by the side of his expiring Isaac—but unavailing are all his tears—life quivers upon the lip and the eye is closed—for ever.

The children of God are never in a condition in which he cannot effectually aid them: *they are the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty.* O blessed thought! our *Father* is *Lord* of *heaven and earth. The silver and the gold are his;* his *are the cattle upon a thousand hills; the world is his and the fulness thereof.* There is no enemy which he cannot vanquish: no disease which he cannot cure: no want which he cannot supply.

Fifthly. Other parents are not suffered to continue by reason of death: and thus their children become orphans. It matters not how heavy the affliction may be—they are left—left perhaps uneducated, unprovided for. Incapable at present of appreciating their loss, they are to learn it by bitter experience. Behold them passing through an unfeeling world, on which they are turned adrift, to be overreached by artifice, oppressed by injustice, injured by violence. In vain do they visit a father's tomb with the voice of joy or of grief; *his sons come to honor and he knoweth it not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them.*

But hear David—" When my father and my mother " forsake me then the Lord will take me up." Hear the church—" Doubtless thou art our father though " Abraham be ignorant of us and Israel acknowledge " us not." With him the relation continues forever—he is *the everlasting Father:* and hence his children can never be orphans. In every loss they have this to comfort them—*the Lord liveth and blessed be my rock, and let the God of my Salvation be exalted.*

Again. The love of parents is far exceeded by the love of God. There is no affection perhaps more ardent and forcible than parental; Hence God assumes it; *like as a father pitieth his children so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.* But this means a likeness of resemblance, not of equality; for the one is no more to the other than a drop to the ocean.—Though the love of a father be great, it is generally and it is justly supposed that the love of a mother is more so. We see in this the wisdom and kindness of providence which thus makes duty a privilege, and reconciles the woman to numberless privations, and cares, and toils in rearing the human race from which the man is exempted. Well God avails himself therefore of this also; *as one whom his mother comforteth so will I comfort you.*

> Can the fond mother from herself depart,
> Can she forget the darling of her heart?
> The little darling whom she bore and bred,
> Nursed on her knee and at her bosom fed?
> To whom she seemed her every thought to give
> And in whose life alone she seemed to live.

—" Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she " would not have compassion on the son of her womb? " yea, they may forget, yet will not I forget thee. Be- " hold I have engraven thee upon the palms of my " hands; thy walls are continually before me. For " this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have " sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go " over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be " *wroth with thee, nor* rebuke thee. For the moun-

'tains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my 'kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the 'covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, 'that hath mercy on thee."

Finally. Parents give good things to their offspring however imperfectly they make known their wants and desires. Behold a family of several children. Here is one who is able to come and ask for his supplies in proper language—a second begs in broken phrases—but here is a third that cannot speak at all—but he can point, he can cry. Sweet babe! thou too art a child—thou too shalt succeed—every thing pleads for thee—thy dimpled cheeks, thy little hand, thy big shining tears—And if *we* who are *evil* do this, what think we of *him* whose *tender mercies are over all his works?* Let us therefore go to him—let us go and ask as we are able. Let us remember that words are not necessary to inform him who knows all things, or to move him who is already more willing to give than we are to receive. He hears the voice of thy *weeping*. Thy *desire* is before him and thy *groaning* is not hid from him.

He calls himself your father, to teach you with what dispositions you should enter his sacred presence. You are encouraged to approach him with holy confidence and humble boldness.

Admire him: love him: hope in him: repair to him—*pray without ceasing; pray and not faint.—He who hears the young ravens that cry* will not refuse the importunity of children. He hears prayer. Thousands, millions have sought him—and none ever sought him in vain. These successful suppliants returning from his throne encourage us to go forward, all saying, *I sought the Lord and he heard me and delivered me from all my fears. They looked unto him and were lightened and their faces were not ashamed. This poor man cried and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.—O taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man that trusteth in him.*

DISCOURSE III.

SATURDAY EVENING.

To-morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord.—Exod. xvi. 23.

ANOTHER week is drawing to a close. Another period has been added to the season of God's long suffering patience, and to the time of your preparation for an eternal world. These hours are gone to appear before God—what can they testify in your favor? They are gone to return no more—how have you improved them? What use have you made of your trials, your mercies, your means of religious instruction and edification? On such an occasion as this, it is well to look back and review the past—but I wish you also to look forward: *to-morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord.* Let us consider the sabbath as a rest, and see with what dispositions we should think of its approach.

The sabbath is *a rest;* and it is so even to the brute creation. The mercies of God are over all his works: He takes care for oxen. O I love to hear him say, *that thine ox and thine ass may rest as well as thou.* If animals were endued with reason how would they bless God for the kind and tender design of a sabbath!—but alas in how many instances does the wickedness of man counteract and defeat the goodness of God.

The sabbath is a rest for the body. Those who live in ease and idleness feel little importance in this: all days are nearly alike to them. But think of the condition of thousands and millions of your fellow creatures

—think of a man sitting six days at a loom, or standing six days at a forge, and so of others:—how inviting, how soothing, how useful, how necessary is a day of repose! Man is impelled to labor: "in the sweat of "thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the "ground: for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou "art and unto dust shalt thou return." But is there nothing to soften the rigor of the obligation? Who could bear everlasting drudgery and fatigue? Behold a refreshing pause: a day of relaxation. The laborer lays aside the implements of industry—changes his apparel—unbends his wearied limbs—enjoys the fresh air of heaven. The alteration of scene conduces to the preservation of health—enlivens the dull sameness of toil, and renews the waste of spirits. Who would be cruel enough and senseless enough to blot out the sabbath from the days of the year! How heavily and joylessly would time pass away without these precious intervals. How many pleasing emotions associate themselves with the idea of a sabbath!—our charming poet therefore has not forgotten to notice the want of this in the lines supposed to have been written by Alexander Selkirk, in his solitary abode.

"But the sound of the church-going bell,
"These valleys and rocks never heard;
"Ne'er sighed at the sound of a knell,
"Nor *smiled* when a sabbath appeared."

But it is principally designed to be a rest for the mind—a spiritual rest—and thus it is not a day of inactivity, but of reflection and devotion—a day in which disengaged from the concerns of time and sense, we may attend to the things which belong to our peace, examine our state and our character, inquire where we are going, and whether we are fit for the journey. It is almost the only opportunity some of the laboring poor have to gain religious information. It is the return of this *day that reminds* them that they are men, that they *are heirs of immortality*. It is the worship of this day

that preserves in them a sense of that dignity and importance which they are so likely to lose while grovelling always in the earth or toiling among the beasts that perish. A pious mind will overflow with joy to behold them under the sound of the gospel, and to think of the accomplishment of these words, "though the Lord give "you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, "yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner "any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers, and "thine ears shall hear a voice behind thee saying, this "is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right "hand, and when ye turn to the left." A pious mind will love to enter the cottage and witness the Sunday scene—the bible is taken down, and while one child is stationed between the knees, and the rest are sitting around, a portion is read of that blessed book which *brings glad tidings to the poor*, and teaches us *in whatever state we are, therewith to be content.*

The real christian indeed does not confine his devotion to particular seasons. He will mingle piety with business, and endeavor to acknowledge God in all his ways—but still he finds week-days to be worldly-days. He wants a retreat—he wants a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.

When therefore he awakes in the morning he can say,

"Welcome sweet day of rest,
"That saw the Lord arise;
"Welcome to this reviving breast,
"And these rejoicing eyes."

Blessed be his name, he has *fed* me through the week —but

"The king himself comes near,
"And *feasts* his saints to-day;
"Here we may sit, and see him here,
"And love and praise and pray."

Here is such a day as christians want—a day entirely *for their souls and their* God. They feel impressed

and sacred; every thing wears a new appearance. And

" With joy they hasten to the place,
" Where they their Saviour oft have met;
" And while they *feast* upon his grace,
" Their burdens and their griefs forget."

This leads us, secondly, to inquire with what dispositions we should think of the approaching sabbath.

We should endeavour to finish all our worldly affairs as early as possible on a Saturday evening, that we may feel free and composed. Edgar one of our Saxon kings passed a law that the sabbath should be observed from nine o'clock Saturday evening till Monday morning. I wish the custom if not the law was revived. How wrong is it for tradesmen, and masters, and mistresses of families to drive things off so as to create hurry and confusion on the very eve of the sabbath, and to retire later and with a mind less fitted for devotion than on any other day in the week! Where something of this is unavoidable, persons are to be pitied. We should expect the return of this season.—

—With thankfulness. Let us bless God for an institution which shews his concern for our present and everlasting welfare, and marks his loving kindness more than his sovereignty: for *the sabbath was made for man.* Let us bless God that our lives are spared, and that in a few hours we hope to hear the multitude who keep holy-day, saying, *let us go into the house of the Lord.* Let us bless him that we are in circumstances which promise us ability to join in the sacred exercises, and that we are not by accidents and diseases doomed to pass a solitary sabbath, and impelled to take up the melancholy complaint,

" Lo the sweet day of sacred rest returns—
" ——————But not to me returns
" Rest with the day. Ten thousand hurrying thoughts
" Bear me away tumultuous, far from heaven
" And heavenly work: alas! flesh drags me down
" From things celestial, and confines my sense
" *To present* maladies. Unhappy state!
" *Where the poor spirit is subdued to feel*

" Unholy idleness ; a painful absence
" From God and heaven and angels' blessed work ;
" And bound to bear the agonies and woes,
" That sickly flesh, and shattered nerves impose."

We should expect the return of the day with holy awe. It is a solemn thought—and we should impress it upon our minds at this season—that every sabbath, every sermon, every prayer and every psalm is a step taken, which brings us nearer heaven or hell—that the means of grace with which we are so frequently indulged will prove either *the savor of life unto life* or *of death unto death.* Yes—these are privileges which will not leave us as they find us ; if they are not food, they will prove poison : if they do not cure, they will be sure to kill. They are talents for each of which we shall be called to give the strictest account, and unimproved, they will sink us deeper in condemnation than jews or heathens.

We should meet the sabbath with pious resolution. Here is at hand a returning season of mercy, let me embrace it. By how many will it be profaned—but *as for me and my house we will serve the Lord.* How many of these invaluable opportunities have I already trifled away! how many have I sinned away! O let me now awake, and be serious and diligent : let me not shorten the day by rising late ; let me not lose it by inattention. Let it not be *a price in the hand of a fool.*

But what is resolution without prayer. " The pre- " paration of the heart and the answer of the tongue in " man are from the Lord"—without him we can do nothing.

Let us therefore betake ourselves to him in humble and earnest prayer ; let us beseech him to grant that we may be " in the spirit on the Lord's day ;" that his grace may be sufficient for us—that we may " wor- ' ship the Lord in the beauties of holiness"—that we may " not be forgetful hearers, but doers of the word" —that in waiting upon him our strength may be renewed—" *that we may* mount up with wings as eagles

" —that we may run and not be weary, and walk and " not faint."

Such a sabbath will leave us prepared for the duties and trials of the week. Such a sabbath will lead us to say, " a day in thy courts is better than a thousand, I " had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God " than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." Such a sabbath will be a foretaste of glory, the beginning of heaven. What is heaven ? " There remaineth," says the apostle, " a rest for the people of God :" it is in the margin a keeping of sabbath. Such is the representation of the happiness above, and O how instructive, how endearing is it to those who love Sabbaths below ? By and by your week-days will be over, and the Saturday evening of life will come. You will lie down—and fall asleep—and open your eyes on a sabbath infinitely superior to any we can expect on earth. Here we worship with a few—there we shall join the general assembly—here we often feel unsuitable frames, and our powers are always unequal to our work—there our faculties will be raised to the highest degree of perfection, and we shall " serve him day and night in his " temple." Here our sabbaths end, and we soon go down again from communion with God into the vexing, debasing things of the world—there the sabbath will be eternal ; and we " shall go no more out—we shall be " for ever with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one " another with these words."

But should there be in this little assembly, one individual who is a stranger to the pleasures of devotion, and who dislikes the employment of God's holy day, let me ask—is *He* qualified for an eternal sabbath who is now groaning as he passes from duty to duty, " what " a weariness it is to serve the Lord ! When will the " sabbath be gone ?" Can *He* enjoy even the thought of being for ever engaged in religious exercises, who at present feels a day, an hour, a few moments employed *in them, disagreeable* and irksome ? The question is *awful—may* the Lord help you to lay it to heart. Amen.

DISCOURSE IV.

THE EYE OF GOD ALWAYS UPON US.

Thou God seest me.—Gen. xvi. 13.

THESE are the words of Hagar, Sarah's maid—and I have read them hoping that you will individually make the reflection your own. They can easily be remembered—because of their brevity: they should be daily thought of—because of their importance. Let us see whether this reflection be not founded in truth; and shew, by taking several views of it, how instructive and edifying it may be rendered.

Hagar was convinced that God saw *her*. Indeed he found her in the wilderness of Shur where no eye saw her. By an angel he admonished her to return and humble herself under the hand of her mistress; and predicted the character and condition of her child unborn.—"He will be a wild man; his hand will be "against every man, and every man's hand against him: "and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren." On this she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, *thou God seest me*.—But how much more striking is this to us? We are able to compare the accomplishment with the prophecy. The descendants of this poor woman's child are the Arabians, and lo! they continue to this day a wandering uncivilized multitude. They live by treachery and plunder; they are in war with all the world: no conqueror has ever subdued them; while they spread themselves over a vast country, thirteen hundred miles in length, and twelve hundred *in breadth*. Can any thing be hid from him who

declareth the end from the beginning, and before a babe is born can describe with unerring exactness the disposition and circumstances of his offspring for a number of ages?

His knowledge of all our concerns may be inferred from his universal presence. Effects prove him to be every where—for every where life is given and sustained—and this is the work of God only: now if he be every where what can be placed out of his sight? Hence we read "can any hide himself in secret places, that I "shall not see him! saith the Lord. Do not I fill "heaven and earth? saith the Lord."

Besides how could he judge the world in righteousness unless he were perfectly acquainted with all our doings? He could not produce what he had never witnessed—but we know that "God will bring every work "into judgment, with every secret thing whether it be "good or whether it be evil." The scripture therefore tells us that "his eyes are in every place beholding both "the evil and the good:" that "his eyes are upon the "ways of man, and he seeth all his goings: there is no "darkness nor shadow of death where the workers of "iniquity may hide themselves. Hell is naked before "him and destruction hath no covering. Neither is "there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: "but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of "him with whom we have to do." Human inspection is very limited, and easily interrupted. I now see you —but place between us only a screen or a curtain and I see you no more. I now behold you—but let the sun go down or this candle be extinguished, and for want of a medium of vision the eye seeks you in vain. Think then of a being of whom it is said "yea the dark-"ness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the "day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee."

What use then should we make of this undeniable truth?—*Thou God seest me* is a reflection very pleasing to *good men*—*very* dreadful to sinners, and very edifying to all.

First, it is very pleasing to good men. Hence when David had been considering the omniscience of God as compassing his path and his lying down, and as acquainted with all his ways, he exclaims "how precious "also are thy thoughts unto me, O Lord, how great is "the sum of them?" His meditation of an all-seeing God was sweet, and therefore it was frequent. How is it with us? If we feel a satisfaction in thinking of this attribute, it is a good evidence of our sincerity. Now this is the case with the christian—he comes to the light, and instead of shunning scrutiny he invites it. If I am not right, says he, I wish to be set right. I know that he will discover in me much that is amiss, but he knows that I am willing to have it cured; and as he alone can heal, why should I wish to keep my physician ignorant of any part of my complaint. "Search "me O God and know my heart try me and know my "thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, "and lead me in the way everlasting."

Thou God seest me! this is a pleasing reflection when I fear some hidden corruption which has hindered the answer of prayer and often deprived me of comfort, but which I cannot after the most faithful investigation detect. He can discern it—"Shew me wherefore thou "contendest with me."

Thou God seest me! This is a pleasing reflection when I feel those infirmities which make me groan. He sees grace however small; he sees the disadvantages of my situation, the influence of the body over the mind, and of sensible things over the body; he sees that the "spirit indeed is willing when the flesh is weak: "he knoweth my frame, he remembereth that I am "dust."

Thou God seest me! This is a pleasing reflection with regard to prayer. I often know not what to pray for as I ought, but he always knows what to give. I cannot express myself properly in words, and words are *not necessary to inform him* who "knoweth what is the

" mind of the spirit—my desire is before him and my " groaning is not hid from him."

Thou God seest me! This is a pleasing reflection when I am suffering under the suspicions of friends, or the reproaches of enemies. " Behold now also my " witness is in heaven and my record is on high. Lord " thou knowest all things thou knowest that I love thee."

Thou God seest me! This is a pleasing reflection, when I am in trouble. He knows all my " walking " through this great wilderness," he knows where the burden presses, he knows how long to continue the trial, and by what means to remove it. In no condition am I hid from my heavenly friend. He saw Jeremiah in the dungeon and Daniel in the lion's den. My circumstances are perplexing—" Behold I go forward " but he is not there : and backward but I cannot be- " hold him : on the left hand where he doth work but " I cannot behold him ; he hideth himself also on the " right hand that I cannot see him.—But he knoweth " the way that I take ; when he hath tried me I shall " come forth as gold. The eyes of the Lord are upon " them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy."

Secondly. To the wicked it is a very awful reflection. Yes, what can be more awful than the thought—that God sees you rise in the morning, goes forth with you, observes you all the day long—that you have passed under his eye from infancy to youth and from youth to manhood—that he has beheld every plan you have formed, every bargain you have made—that he has observed not only actions but motives, not only words but thoughts, not only the evil you have committed but the evil you wished to commit, all the filthiness of your imaginations as well as of your lives—all the difficulties you have had to overcome in pursuing a sinful course, every check of conscience, every rebuke of providence—and has noticed not only the number but aggravations of all your crimes. And what renders all this still more dreadful is this—that he does not forget *any thing he has seen.* You have forgotten many of

your transgressions, but he remembers even the sins of your youth. Sometimes persons sin from custom and habit; and know not when they do so—for instance, they know not when they lie or swear. If it were possible to secure all their evil words for one month, one year—and read it to them—what a surprize would they express? Well not one of them has escaped the divine notice: he has recorded them all in the book of his remembrance. And to complete the terror of this consideration—all he has seen he will publish before the whole world; and he will also punish all that he has seen "with everlasting destruction from the presence "of the Lord and from the glory of his power."

Thirdly. The reflection will be found very useful to persons of every class.—

Useful as a check to sin. For can a person sin while he realizes this; can he affront the Almighty to his very face?—Impossible. This would restrain us even from secret faults, and make us as pure in the closet as in the sanctuary, for God is in the one as well as in the other.

"—O may these thoughts possess my breast
"Where'er I rove, where'er I rest;
"Nor let my weaker passions dare
"Consent to sin for God is there."

Useful as a motive to virtue. The presence, the eye of one who is above us, and whom we highly esteem and reverence elevates our minds and refines our behaviour: and we desire to act so as to gain his approbation. A servant feels this when he is before his master, and a subject when he is before the king. One of the heathen philosophers therefore recommended his pupils as the best means to induce and enable them to behave worthily—to imagine that some very distinguished character was always looking upon them. But what was the eye of a Cato compared with the eye of Jehovah? *Who would* not approve themselves unto God? "*In his favor is life.* I have kept thy precepts and thy

" testimonies, says David, for all my ways are before " thee."

Finally. Useful as a reason for simplicity and godly sincerity. O let it banish all dissimulation from our religious exercises; and whether we read or hear or pray or surround the table of the Lord, let us remember that " God weigheth the spirits." If we had to do with men only a fair appearance might be sufficient, " but the Lord looketh to the heart." And can we play the hypocrite under those eyes which are as a flame of fire? What will a name to live, a form of godliness avail us with him who is " a spirit and seeketh such to worship him " as worship him in spirit and in truth."

Let us then no longer suffer ourselves to be led by sense, but let us live and walk by faith. Let this important truth sink down into our hearts—that the eye of God is always upon us. The truth indeed remains the same whether we regard it or not—but if we lay hold of it by faith and keep it present in our thoughts by meditation, it will be found the noblest of all principles; it will preserve us from sin; it will excite us to duty; it will make us " sincere and without offence till the day " of Christ."

DISCOURSE V.

THE DEATH OF JESUS.

(GOOD FRIDAY)

Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.—John xii. 24.

DEATH—death the most dreadful of all events has often been rendered a blessing.

The death of a *believer* has been useful. It has encouraged and established those who were walking in the way to Zion with many a trembling step and many a shivering fear how it would go with them at last. When they have viewed a dying christian, and have seen the grace of God they have been glad: their courage has been revived, and they have rejoiced in hope. Why may it not be so with me? "The Lord is my "helper I will not fear." His looks, his words, his experience have also made an impression on the minds of the careless which has never been erased. After turning their backs on a sermon they have been convinced by a dying bed. There the evidence was too plain to be denied, too solemn to be ridiculed. They have admired and resolved to follow a master who is so good to his servants and who does not "forsake them when "their strength faileth but is the strength of their heart "and their portion for ever."—And the death of the saint has proved the life of the sinner.

The death of a parent has been useful. His expiring charge has never been forgotten. The thought of

separation for ever from one so loved and valued has awakened in the son a salutary fear. Returning from a father's grave he has met with God saying *wilt thou not from this time cry unto me; my father! thou art the guide of my youth?* and turning into his closet he has kneeled and said O thou *in whom the fatherless findeth mercy, I am thine, save me.*—And the death of the parent has proved the life of the child.

The death of a *minister* has been useful. Some of the servants of God have laboured faithfully without seeing the fruit of their labors. One has sown and another has reaped. But the removal of our mercies by shewing us their value leads us to prize them. It has been so with many a conscientious preacher: he has been little regarded while living, but when dead his word has come with power to the conscience; his addresses, prayers and tears have been remembered by his people; and the expectation of meeting him at the last day has forced them to exclaim how shall we escape? —And the death of the minister has proved the life of the hearer.

The death of a *martyr* has been useful. His patience and fortitude; his joy and triumph; his forgiveness of injuries and his prayers for his persecutors have struck beholders, rendered a religion honorable that could produce such marvellous effects, led to an examination of its evidences; and faith and zeal have been the result of inquiry. "The wrath of man has praised "God,"—"and the blood of the martyrs has been the "seed of the church."—

But where are we now? We have an example to produce infinitely greater than all these. Let us leave the disciples, and behold their Lord: The members of *the household of faith* and survey *the author and finisher of faith.* Jesus dies, and his death is the *life of the world.* The death of the believer has been the life of the sinner: the death of the father has been the life of *the son: the death* of the preacher has been the life *of the hearer:* the death of the martyr has been the life

of the beholder—But our Lord Jesus as he was going to be crucified exclaimed " I if I be lifted up will draw " all men unto me."—This is the meaning of the words which I have read. " Verily, verily, I say unto you, " except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, " it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much " fruit."

Go forth and behold the process of vegetation. Take a corn of wheat—how small, how insignificant, how useless it appears. But it is extremely valuable and with care may be made to stock a field, a country. But how does it thus multiply? Keep it in the granary and it remains the same. It must be sown to fructify and increase. Let it be buried under the clods and perish as to its present form and appearance—and lo it springs up, and brings forth in some places " thirty, in some sixty, and " in some an hundred fold." And behold the mystery of the cross, around which we are this day assembled. It was equally necessary for our Saviour to suffer and die. In death he becomes the principle of our life; by this he fills heaven with praise, the church with blessings, the world with followers. This is the *fruit* which by dying he *brings forth*—an immense number of christians.

For you know a grain of corn multiplies by yielding other grains like itself. " That which thou sowest is " not quickened except it die: and that which thou " sowest thou sowest not that body that shall be but bare " grain, it may chance of wheat or of some other grain: " but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and " to every seed his own body."

If therefore Jesus be compared to seed, and he be sown to increase, he will produce others like himself. If barley be sown barley comes up; if wheat be sown wheat appears; if Christ be sown christians are brought forth.—This is a very striking and a very useful thought. For it may asked what are christians? And the answer is what was Christ? They are predes*tinated to be conformed* to him: and as they " have " *born the image of* the earthy they must also bear the im-

" age of the heavenly." Here indeed the likeness is not complete—but it will be perfect in due time: they " shall be like him for they shall see him as he is"—as entirely like him as one grain of corn resembles another, from which it was derived, in substance and in figure. But let us remember that the likeness is now begun and must be advancing, according to the words of the apostle, " beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord we " are changed into the same image from glory to glory " even as by the spirit of the Lord."—He was " not of " the world" and christians " are not of the world." It was his " meat to do the will of him that sent him ;" and they also can say " his commandments are not " grievous. He went about doing good :" and they are endeavouring to " serve their generation according to " the will of God." He " was meek and lowly in " heart :" and they " are learning of him. The world " knoweth them not for it knew him not." A christian springs from Christ ; and he is like him.

There is one thing here which we should not overlook for it will afford the benevolent mind a delicious pleasure ; I mean the largeness of the crop—This corn of wheat by dying bringeth forth *much fruit.* " Are " there few that shall be saved ?" This question was once proposed to our Saviour, and it is observable that he made no reply to it ; but he did say to those that asked him, " strive to enter in at the strait gate ; for " many I say unto you, will seek to enter in and shall " not be able ;" and by this he has taught us that it is wiser to endeavour to secure our salvation individually, than curiously to inquire after or dispute about the number of the saved. If however the question was asked properly we could answer—no. He is leading *many sons unto glory :* and when he has collected them all together they will be found " a great multitude which " no man can number of all nations and kindreds and " people and tongues." Of him whose soul was made an offering for sin, it is said, the " pleasure of the Lord " *shall prosper* in his hand : He shall see of the travail

" of his soul and shall be satisfied." And will a little good, a little success satisfy the vastness of his benevolence? O how many must be delivered from misery and restored to happiness before *he* will say " *it is* " *enough;* I am fully repaid for the anguish I endured " in the garden and on the cross!"

Now all those who will be saved owe their spiritual being and blessedness to his death. This is fully expressed. Had he not died he would have *remained alone*—and accordingly while *alive* he *was* comparatively alone. He had some followers, but they were few in number and of one nation only: the Gentiles were not addressed—But lo! when he *dies* he brings forth much fruit; he becomes considerable and renowned as a leader: three thousand were called under one sermon; and " the Lord added to the church daily such as should " be saved. Mightily grew the word of the Lord and " prevailed." It spread from city to city, from province to province till it soon reached the boundaries of the Roman empire. Now this was adapted and designed to shew that his sufferings were to precede his glory; and that by dying he was to have a numerous " seed " to serve him which should be accounted to the Lord " for a generation."

And does not every thing that enlivens us, and conforms us to our Lord and Saviour derive its existence and its efficacy from his death?

Is the influence of the Holy Ghost needful to convince us of sin and renew us in the spirit of our minds? This is the purchase, the reward, the consequence of his death. " Christ hath redeemed us from the curse " of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is writ- " ten, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree; that " the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles " through Jesus Christ: that we might receive the " promise of the spirit through faith."

Is deliverance from our spiritual enemies necessary to our " serving him without fear in holiness and right- " *eousness before him* all the days of our life? Here

" he spoils principalities and powers and makes a shew " of them openly. Now is the judgment of this world, " now is the prince of this world cast out."

Is it necessary for us to feel " a lively hope" by which we " draw nigh to God ?" The cross inspires it. " Surely he hath borne our grief and carried our sor- " row ; the chastisement of our peace was upon him " and with his stripes we are healed. He that spared " not his own son but delivered him up for us all ; how " shall he not with him also freely give us all things ?"

Has gratitude an influence in forming the christian character ? Here, here it is inflamed. " For the love " of Christ constraineth us because we thus judge, that " if one died for all, then were all dead : and that he " died for all, that they which live should not hence- " forth live unto themselves, but unto him which died " for them, and rose again. Unto him that loved us " and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and " hath made us kings and priests unto God and to his " father : to him be glory and dominion for ever and " ever. Amen."

Finally. Is an example of holiness indispensible ? Here we behold a representation of all the graces and the duties he recommended. Here we see an entire obedience and submission to the will of his heavenly father—humility the most profound—patience the most astonishing—forbearance the most free from revenge—the love of relations and friends the most exquisitely tender—" He suffered for us leaving us an example " that we should follow his steps." And thus all the principles and assistances of the christian life are furnished by the death of the Saviour. Let us conclude by three reflections.

And first. Let us render the works of nature instructive and edifying. Let us not be of the number of those of whom the prophet speaks, when he says *seeing many things they observe not*—nór let us contemplate the creation with the eye of a naturalist only. *Let us go over it as* christians ; let us hold commun-

ion with *things unseen and eternal*, by means of those *who are seen and temporal.* Thus our Saviour has taught us to find the influence of the gospel in the leaven hid in the meal, the agency and comforts of the Holy Ghost in the blowing of the wind, and in rivers of living water; and the efficacy, utility and necessity of his death in the sowing, corruption, and the revival of corn.

Secondly. "God is wonderful in council and ex-" cellent in working. His thoughts are not our " thoughts, neither are his ways our ways." The enemy supposed he had completely succeeded when our Lord was crucified—now his cause is crushed, his followers will be dispersed and annihilated, and his name will be heard no more. But all this was "according to " the determinate council and foreknowledge of God;" death was the road to life, and shame to everlasting renown. They were sowing him to make him fruitful. In falling a victim he conquered: and from the cross he passed to the possession of a throne in which he reigns king of saints, and will reign king of nations.

Thirdly. What think ye of *Christ crucified?* I know what prophets and apostles thought of it. I know the importance his death occupies in the scriptures of truth. I know that when Moses and Elias appeared in glory, " they spake of the decease which he would ac-" complish at Jerusalem." I know an ordinance is expressly appointed to *shew forth his death;* that the preaching of the gospel is called *the preaching of the cross;* and that the praises of heaven are ascribed to him as " the lamb that was slain and has redeemed us " unto God by his blood"—But what are your views of this interesting subject? *To the Jews* it was *a stumbling block;* to *the Greeks foolishness;* and to thousands now it is a thing of no importance. Is it to you *the wisdom of God* and *the power of God?* Our creed and our experience will be found very defective unless they have much of the sufferings and death of Christ in them. *Spirit of grace* and truth take of the things of *Jesus and shew them unto us.* May we know the fel-

lowship of his sufferings; may we *be made comformable unto his death:* and be enabled individually to say "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet "not I but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now "live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the son of God "who loved me and gave himself for me.—God for-"bid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord "Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, "and I unto the world."

DISCOURSE VI.

CONFIDENCE IN GOD COMPOSING THE MIND.

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee.—Isaiah xxvi. 3.

IN many things people differ widely from each other, but in one thing they are agreed—they all wish for satisfaction, they all desire inward tranquillity. And indeed what is every thing else without this? What is ease of circumstances, and even health of body if the *mind* be perplexed, distracted, tormented? "The "spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity but a wounded "spirit who can bear?"

Now Isaiah tells us how we may obtain and preserve a blessed composure in a miserable world. "Thou "wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed "on thee." These words require some explanatory remarks, and furnish some practical reflections.

In explaining these words it may be necessary to inquire *first* what we are to understand by *staying the mind on God?* And to this we answer, that it simply means relying upon him or trusting in him. Man is an indigent and a dependent creature. He is not equal to his own happiness; he feels a thousand necessities which he cannot supply from his own stores; he therefore goes abroad for succor, and looks after something to lean on—and as the world always stands nearest, upon this he always leans first. And though he finds it to *be a broken reed* which disappoints his hope and pierces

him through with many sorrows, he returns to this miserable dependence again and again, till divine grace brings him to his proper rest, and enables him to say—"now Lord what wait I for, my hope is in thee." And thus are fulfilled the words of the prophet; "It "shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of "Israel and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob "shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; "but shall stay upon the Lord, the holy one of Israel in "truth. The remnant shall return, even the remnant "of Jacob unto the mighty God."—Now that which, in these cases, we stay the mind upon is the word of God—consisting of information and promises—revealing his goodness and his all-sufficiency—offering himself as our portion and even commanding us to depend upon him. Accordingly it is said, "trust in him at all "times; ye people pour out your hearts before him; "God is a refuge for us. Trust ye in the Lord for "ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength" —Here is a foundation that will not give way, a resource that cannot fail. And here we learn what is our duty; it is—not to hesitate, not to wait for fresh evidence and assurance—but to believe what God has spoken, to take him at his word, and to venture upon his engagements. In doing this we run no manner of risk: his word is called *the faithful word;* it is said also to be a *tried word:* and those who have tried it most have the firmest persuasion of its truth.

Now this staying of the mind on God, secondly, *keeps it in peace:* and it does this, not only as it insures the divine blessing—for God will honor them that honor him, and by nothing is he so much glorified as by our reliance upon him—but also by a natural influence and tendency. Let us specify a few instances in which this confidence tranquillizes the mind.

This alone can calm the mind when convinced of sin, and searching in dreadful distress for pardon. *We which have believed,* says the apostle, *do* enter into rest. *"I am guilty" cries* the awakened sinner, "but my

" condition is not desperate. I wait for the Lord, my " soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope. I hear a " voice saying, behold the Lamb of God that taketh " away the sin of the world. The blood of Jesus " Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin. Here is " something to stay the mind upon. He died for the " ungodly; and such am I, yea more; he invites all " that labor and are heavy laden to come to him, and " promises to give them rest—and mine iniquities are " a burden too heavy for me to bear, and I sigh and " groan, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver " me from the body of this death." Sometimes this confidence is very feeble; it scarcely amounts to a probability—it is merely a kind of peradventure—*who can tell?*—I may succeed. But even this is attended with some effect. Like a twig to a sinking man, it serves to keep his head above water; until something else can be brought strong enough to help him ashore. Or to vary the image; it will keep him from giving up in despair the use of means and of prayer. " I will hang upon " him till he shakes me off. If he drives me back, it " is nothing more than I deserve—but I will not go " back. If he is pleased to kill me, I shall have no " right to complain—but I will not be my own murderer. *If I perish, I perish*, but here I will die." In other cases this confidence rises higher; and however unworthy and helpless the man feels himself to be, he is persuaded that God will receive him graciously, and in due time appear to his joy. In consequence of this, agitation and terror subside, and he " both hopes and " quietly waits for the salvation of the Lord."

This confidence also calms the mind under delays. To pray and receive no answer; to stand knocking—not like other beggars for a few moments, but from day to day and from week to week, and see no opening—this is truly discouraging—and the danger is, lest we should withdraw, saying with the unbelieving nobleman, " *why should* I wait for the Lord any longer?" But " *he that believeth* maketh not haste." He will say—

l is a sovereign—I have no claims upon him—a de-
is no refusal—perhaps he has answered me already,
I have a substitute for the blessing implored—how-
r this may be—of one thing I am certain; I must
:eed at last: "He never said to the seed of Jacob
:ek ye me in vain."—Hence springs *the patience of*
?.

'his confidence composes the mind in the events of
—and this is the thing principally intended. We
in a world of changes, and uncertainties. Disor-
and confusion seem every where to reign. Vice is
n triumphant and virtue oppressed. And with re-
l to ourselves, our wisest schemes are frequently
arted, our fairest hopes destroyed, our choicest
ıforts laid waste. Thus we are liable to be perpe-
ly ruffled and dismayed: and there is only one
ıciple that can sustain and solace the mind—It is
r confidence in God. Nothing occurs by chance—
l governs the world—If we could see what God
ı, we should do precisely what God does—his peo-
are his care—nothing can essentially injure them—
." *all things are working together for their good.*"
ese are reasons for repose. Here the mind fixes,
l feels peace.—The peace of a child who has only to
ıd his book; the father will manage and provide.
e peace of a traveller who has one with him to order
the journey, and to bear all the expence. It is a
ıce that flows from the absence of anxiety; the be-
ver casts all his care upon the Lord who careth for
ı; he reclines his head on the soft bosom of provi-
ıce and falls asleep. This peace peculiarly regards
ricate dispensations: for these are the most apt to
plex and discompose the mind. But when the mind
ıtayed on God, the believer is satisfied and serene
n in darkness. Though I know not whither I am
ng, I know with whom—my guide is infallible. I
l not *charge him foolishly*, but confide in his skill:
hat he does I know not now, but I shall know here-
ter." *I see much* wisdom in what is clear, but

there is much more in what is obscure: it is the depth that makes it profound, and that renders it so difficult to fathom. This tranquillity is commonly preceded by many a struggle with self-will and self-conceit. We naturally wish to have things according to our mind, and make various attempts to govern our own affairs. But by degrees we are convinced that "the way of man "is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to di- "rect his steps." After repeated deceptions both on the side of our hopes and fears; after many embarrassments into which our folly and rashness had plunged us, or to which they had exposed us, we begin to say in earnest, "the Lord shall chuse our inheritance for "us." I have now done. "Lord my heart is not "haughty, nor mine eyes lofty; neither do I exercise "myself in great matters, or in things too high for me. "Surely I have behaved and quieted myself as a child "that is weaned of his mother; my soul is even as a "weaned child."

But the peace that flows from this trust in God is, thirdly, said to be *perfect*. It is not indeed absolutely so, as if it was incapable of addition—but it is so first comparatively. What is every other peace to this?—What is the delusion of the Pharisee—the stupidity and carelessness of the sinner—the corn and wine of the worldling? What is every thing else compared with this peace?—What can be so desirable, so excellent? It is *a continual feast*.

Secondly. In relation to this confidence. It is true this peace rises and falls, but it is only because this confidence varies. All the disquietudes which a christian feels, spring from the weakness or the want of faith in God. It is not from outward things. These are often blamed, and these may be very trying—but it is not the water without the vessel that sinks it, but that which gets in. The primitive christians could say, "we are "troubled on every side, yet not distressed. Sorrow- "*ful, yet always* rejoicing." It is very possible there- *fore to have this* peace within, while in the world we

have tribulation: and christians are so accessible to fear, so preyed upon by anxiety, so depressed by afflictions of various kinds, because they do not sufficiently rely on God—"If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be es-"tablished." It is therefore true that *in proportion* as the mind is stayed on God, he keeps it in *perfect* peace.

Let us apply the passage thus explained to some practical purposes.

First. *How safe and how happy are real believers.* The people of the world are exceedingly mistaken respecting them. They imagine their life to be a sad, heavy, gloomy thing; whereas it is the most free, and cheerful, and placid. While others are struggling in their own strength and managing all their concerns themselves, fretful when they meet with untoward events, and always dissatisfied even when they succeed, the christian "casts his burden upon the Lord and he "sustains him." He leaves his affairs with God, and goes on assured that he will order them aright. His concern is only to please and glorify God in the circumstances in which he is placed; events are the Lord's. He is "careful for nothing but in every thing by prayer "and supplication, with thanksgiving he makes his re-"quests known unto God, and the peace of God which "passeth all understanding keeps his heart and mind "through Christ Jesus." "I hope in him for eternal "life, and it would be shameful not to trust in him for "every present supply. He who spared not his own "son, will withhold no good thing from me. It is "comparatively a matter of little consequence what be-"falls me here; I am only a stranger and a pilgrim; "my God ruleth over all; and he has promised that he "will never leave me nor forsake me. The Lord is "my helper; I will not fear."

"He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is "fixed, trusting in the Lord."—Tell him his substance is destroyed. No, says he, my "inheritance is incor-"*ruptible and* undefiled, and fadeth not away, re-"*served in heaven* for me." Tell him such a friend

or relation is dead. But says he, "the Lord liveth and "blessed be my work, and let the God of my salvation "be exalted." And you are decaying, and dying yourself—yes, says he, I am sent for, and am going home. With regard to public calamities he feels, and in some respects he feels more than others. Divine grace produces sensibility, and excites a public spirit. He knows the desert of sin, and the indications of approaching wrath make him shudder. "My flesh trembleth for "fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments." But strange as it may appear, there is a firmness and a composure of mind blended with all these feelings. He knows that "the Lord reigneth;" that he is *doing all things*, and doing all things *well;* that whatever becomes of other empires, the gospel *shall* spread, the church *is* safe: and these are the most important interests—these render the world valuable. He can therefore join with Luther, who said whenever he heard of any alarming intelligence, "come let us sing the forty-"sixth psalm;" "God is our refuge and strength, a "very present help in trouble; therefore will not we "fear, though the earth be removed, and the mountains "be carried into the depth of the sea.—God is in the "midst of her; she shall not be moved; God shall help "her, and that right early.—The Lord of hosts is with "us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah."

Secondly. *Let us seek after this blessed condition of the godly.* Till the mind be stayed on God it has no resting place. It is union with God that gives the mind solidity. How light is it detached from God: it is blown about easier than the down of a thistle in the wind. Out of him as the sanctuary of the soul every storm annoys; every trifle disquiets: and "man at "his best estate is altogether vanity." If any thing could add force to these reflections it would be the nature of the times in which we live. We behold a *cloudy and dark day.* The revolutions which have taken place and the general aspect of things at present are dreadful *to those who have* no God. O let a sense of our dan-

ger endear the only refuge, and the vanity of this world induce us to seek after the real happiness of another. Let us abandon the practice of sin, and no longer "lay "up for ourselves treasure upon earth," which only serves to debase the soul and fill it with perpetual alarms —and let us ask for God our "maker who giveth songs "in the night;" let us depend upon him, cleave to him, live in him.

On what else can we rely that will not, instead of settling the mind discompose it the more? Is it honor? What so precarious and variable as the praise of man? Is it affluence? "The rich man's wealth is his strong "city, and as a high wall in his own conceit." But does not every day's observation as well as scripture cry, "trust not in uncertain riches but in the living God." Is it moral philosophy; a strength of reasoning? There are circumstances in which the calmest reflections, and the noblest resolutions will be only as stubble before the wind. In the time of trial all other supports will fail: the storm increasing will drive us from our holdings: There is only one "anchor of the soul, sure and sted- "fast." It is a scriptural hope in God. This will prepare a man for all the vicissitudes of time; this will help him to go on his way rejoicing through all the troubles of life; and this will finally enable him to look *the king of terrors* out of countenance and to exult with the apostle, "nay, in all these things we are more than con- "querors through him that loved us. For I am per- "suaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor "principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor "things to come, nor heighth, nor depth, nor any other "creature shall be able to separate us from the love of "God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

DISCOURSE VII.

SPRING.

Thou renewest the face of the earth.—Ps. civ. 30.

ALL nature is a book, and the various parts of it are as so many multiplied pages in which we may read and consider "the wonderful works of God." The seasons of the year are every way interesting, They are necessary for the production of our food, and the preservation of our health. Their succession adds to the beauty of creation. Their revolutions furnish us with subjects of reflection, and lessons of importance.

The season is arrived in which we behold the renovation of nature. Let us endeavor to render it profitable to our minds.

I. David was an attentive observer of the works of creation. Many a fine evening did he employ in "considering the heavens, the work of God's finger, the "moon and the stars which he has ordained." He rose early, and beheld the "sun as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoicing as a strong man "to run a race." He looked abroad in winter and exclaimed, "he sendeth abroad his ice like morsels, who "can stand before his cold?" He rejoiced when more favorable weather encouraged him to walk abroad: he observed "the birds building their nests, the springs "running among the valleys, the grass growing for the "cattle, and herbs for the service of man." And hailing the revival of a faded world, lifted up his eyes and *said* "*thou renewest* the face of the earth."

There are few real lovers of nature; there are few

who so behold its scenes as to pause and admire, till they have imbibed a sympathy with them; till they feel themselves at home in them; till they are detached from every thing human, and little, and debasing. Let us go forth into the field to meditate: meditation is often better than books. Our own thoughts will do us much more good than the opinions of others. Wisdom and truth are shy in the world, but here they are easily discovered and secured. Danger often attends our perusal of the works of men, but there is no hazard in pursuing knowledge among the works of God. People complain of the world, and confess whenever they return from its companies and diversions, that "all is va-"nity and vexation of spirit"—why will they not come forth and refresh themselves here? Why will they not leave the wilderness and enter this garden of the Lord? Here I live in a world of my own—here I feel my independence and my freedom—here I can learn how I have been overcome, and where I must place a watch and a guard—here the good thoughts which were scattered and weak before, are collected into a powerful motive, and bear down all opposition to duty—what was wavering before is now decided—what was timid, grows courageous. When I go into the field, I enter my closet, I shut the door about me; I admit what company I please; I exclude the vicious who would pollute, and the trifling who would interrupt; I hear not the folly of the vain, or the slander of the malicious, that world of iniquity which drops from the tongue: "I pray to my father which is in secret; mine eye "poureth out tears unto God;" I have an emblem of final repose—"here the wicked cease from troubling, "and here the weary are at rest."

"God made the country, and man made the town." Nevertheless how many are there who leave the works of the Creator to bury themselves among those of the creature; and while professing to admire the beautiful and the marvellous, disregard the wonders that are *perpetually springing* up around them. They will go

any distance, incur any expence to see a piece of mechanism, sculpture, painting; while they pass by productions infinitely more curious, and finished in the way. They are struck with a fine robe, but never contemplate a lily, "and yet I say unto you, that Solomon "in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." When a man of fame announces a design to perform any thing, thousands flock around him; while God working day by day, the most astonishing effects, is unnoticed; and no one is drawn forth to attend to him, though "he has said, I will that men magnify my "works which they behold."

II. It becomes us not only to observe nature, but to observe it devotionally, and as christians. There is a difference between viewing and improving these things: there is a difference between our studying them as mere admirers and philosophers, and applying them as men formed by divine grace for a life of communion with God. It is the command of the apostle—"whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of "the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the father "by him."

See a christian among the works of nature. He looks after God in all—for he needs him in all: and he is enabled to find him. Though familiar with the effect, he does not disregard the cause; with him common instrumentality does not conceal divine agency. He maintains in his mind a connection between the author and the work, and the one reminds him of the other. He walks with him in the ways of his providence, as well as in his goings in the sanctuary, adores him in the field as well as in the temple, and acknowledges him in the ordinary course of nature, as well as in the extraordinary displays of his power, and wisdom, and goodness.

He also makes them images to remind him of better things. The rising sun brings to his thoughts "the sun "of righteousness arising with healing under his wings:" *a flowing spring*, the influence of the Holy Ghost: the

rain and the dew, the doctrine of the gospel. Thus by a holy chemistry, he extracts heaven from earth.

From these scenes he also derives motives to devotion, and encouragements to confidence. For instance: does he view a proof of divine wisdom? He cries, "O how able is this God to teach me, to manage all "my concerns—how wonderful in council, how ex- "cellent in working." Does he contemplate a display of divine power? "How able is this God to preserve, "sustain, deliver me?" Is any thing too hard for the Lord? Does he observe instances of his bounty? He asks—"can he who hears the ravens that cry refuse "supplies to his children?"

Nor does he partake of the bounties of nature like a brute, only concerned to gratify his animal appetite, and entirely regardless of him from whom every indulgence comes. He receives them from the hand of his heavenly father; he tastes his love in them; he cries, "O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, "and for his wonderful works to the children of men. "Bless the Lord, O my soul—who gives me all things "richly to enjoy," and who provides, not only for my relief, but delight. I will live to him who lives in so many ways for me, and by "his mercies I will pre- "sent my body a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable "unto him which is my reasonable service."

III. Let us observe and adore this wonderworking God in *renewing the face of the earth.* How many times has he done this since the creation? He does it every year. The change is equally remarkable and pleasing. See the winter drawing off his army of winds, and frosts, and snow, and hail—and spring succeeding the monarch of desolation. Under his soft and gentle reign, all begins to smile: life in a thousand ways breaks forth; all is verdure, and fragrance, and beauty; all is joyous—what variety of colors, what harmony of sounds. "The valleys stand thick with rising corn, "and the little hills rejoice on every side," while a *voice from the* fields and meadows calls—"arise—and

" come away ; for lo! the winter is past, the rain is " over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth ; the " time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of " the turtle is heard in our land."

Let us remember, that he who renews the face of the earth, can renew the *church*. Think of any particular cause—however depressed, he can revive it ; however small, he can increase it. When his influences descend, " his word comes down like rain upon the mown " grass, as showers that water the earth :" and his people are *filled with all the fruits of righteousness*—the congregation is *like a field which the Lord has blessed.* Or think of his cause at large.—He can drive away errors, and superstition, and animosities from the nations of the globe, and bless the world with the gospel of peace, and the means of salvation—and the " wilder- " ness, and solitary place shall be glad for them ; and " the desart shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It " shall blossom abundantly and rejoice even with joy " and singing ; the glory of Lebanon shall be given " unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon ; they " shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of " our God."—

He can also renew *the soul.* The fall has reduced our spiritual powers to a state of desolation the most deplorable. Now when a sinner is led to see and feel this, he prays, " create in me a clean heart, O God, and " renew a right spirit within me." And we read of the " renewing of the Holy Ghost ; and of being renewed " in the spirit of our minds. Thus God beautifies the " meek with salvation," and the change in nature is an imperfect representation of the change made in the soul by divine grace. This can illuminate the darkest understanding, and soften the most rebellious will ; this can tranquillize the most troubled conscience, and sanctify the most depraved affections. After conversion the people of God may have a winter season : their growth may be checked ; every thing may appear to be dead ; they may feel the chilling absence of the sun of

righteousness, and sigh *O when wilt thou come unto me.* But when he returns all revives: then the believer is quickened, and expands, and buds, and brings forth "much fruit: he has life, and he has it more abun-"dantly."

Again. He can renew *the body.* Has sickness invaded thy frame? art thou "made to possess months "of vanity, and are wearisome nights appointed unto "thee;" art thou saying my "purposes are broken off "—mine eye shall no more see good? Remember he "killeth and maketh alive, he bringeth down to the "grave and raiseth up." Every disease is under his control and goes at his bidding. He can re-color thy cheeks, "strengthen thy weak hands, and confirm thy "feeble knees, so that thy youth shall be renewed like "the eagles." Let the body die—even then we are not hopeless—he shall renew it. "So is the resurrec-"tion of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is "raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonor, it is "raised in glory: it is sown in weakness it is raised in "power: it is sown a natural body, it shall be raised a "spiritual body. According to his promise we look for "new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth "righteousness. And God shall wipe away all tears "from our eyes: and there shall be no more death, "neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any "more pain: for the former things are passed away."

—To conclude. The seasons of the year have often been considered as emblems of human life.—*Youth* is the *spring.* Yes, my dear young friends, yours is the season of which nature, lovely nature now reminds us. Think of this in all your walks. How pleasing and how beautiful is spring! But how short, how fading—yet how important! On this all the year depends. If no blossoms now appear, or if these blossoms be destroyed, no glory in summer, no abundance in autumn, no provision in winter.

My young friends, you are now forming your future *destiny, and giving* a character to your future years.

O seize these valuable hours for purposes the most momentous—The improvement of your understanding, the correction of your tempers, the formation of your habits, the enlargement of your capacity to serve God and your generation, and above all—diligence in "working out your salvation with fear and trembling."—And thou God of all grace hear our prayer. "Let thy "work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto "their children, and let the beauty of the Lord our "God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our "hands upon us; yea the work of our hands establish "thou it. That our sons may be as plants grown up in "their youth, and our daughters as corner stones, po-"lished after the similitude of a palace." Amen.

DISCOURSE VIII.

THE HAPPY FAMILY.

Now Jesus loved Martha, and her Sister, and Lazarus.—John xi. 5.

THE Scripture is not filled with the creations of worlds, the revolutions of empires, the palaces of kings, the intrigues of politicians, the exploits of heroes. In perusing it we are often led into common and private life; and are called upon largely to observe individuals who made no splendid figure in the eyes of mankind. But a character may be important, and interesting without secular honors—He that is born of God is truly great, and he that is beloved of the Saviour is truly happy. Many persons of distinction who once lived in Judea are now forgotten; their names, their places of abode, their connections have all perished from the earth—but there is one family transmitted down to our own times with peculiar marks of regard, and which will be had *in everlasting remembrance.* It resided at Bethany, and consisted of a brother and two sisters. These three happy individuals lived together in harmony and in piety—and what crowned the whole was this: "now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and "Lazarus." Let us consider—*the objects* of this Love —*the nature* of it—and *the manner* in which it was *expressed.*

I. The objects of this love were *Martha, and her sister and Lazarus.* It is worthy of our observation, that several of our Lord's immediate followers were

related to each other. Peter and Andrew were brothers; John and James were brothers; so also were James and Jude. The ruler whose son our Lord cured, *believed, and his whole house.* And here our Saviour had three disciples in one dwelling when perhaps the whole village scarcely produced a fourth.

I pity the family where there is *no one* beloved of Jesus—no friend to attract the Saviour's regards—no protector to stand in the breach and keep back invading judgments—no intercessor to draw down the blessing of heaven—no good example to reprove, encourage, stimulate. What does an angel think when he passes by such an irreligious dwelling!

It is a mercy to find even *one* pious individual in a house. And whoever that distinguished character be —I would say to him—be thankful; be circumspect; remember every eye observes you; and every tongue is asking *what do ye more than others?* Labor to be the happy instrument of the conversion of the rest. Render your religion amiable; "whatsoever things are "lovely and of good report, think on these things. For "what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save "thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man whether "thou shalt save thy wife?" But O how happy is that family "where two or three can gather together in his "name" and know that he is "in the midst of them;" where the whole number "are of one heart and of one soul;" where all are connected together by claims more endearing than those of nature, by ties which death cannot dissolve, nor eternity impair. And such was this family.

But though these three were all beloved of our Lord, they appear to *have differed from each other very considerably.* Of Lazarus indeed much is not said. He seems to have been a serious, solid, established professor of religion. But the two sisters are more strongly marked; more minutely characterised. Mary it is *probable had* been lately called. She was full of those *pleasing, but often transient emotions which generally*

accompany the beginning of the christian life. Wondering at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth, " she sat at the feet of Jesus." Of a devotional taste, a contemplative turn of mind, she was disposed to give more time and attention to her favorite exercises, than perhaps prudence would justify. The reverse of this was the defect of Martha. She was anxious, and eager. She was susceptible of domestic vanity, and therefore too fond of parade and expensive entertainment—" cumbered about much serving." She was also fretful, and by the loss of temper betrayed into such indiscretion as to break in upon our Lord's discourse, and petulently to require him to send Mary to her assistance, and thus drew upon herself the rebuke of the Saviour: " Martha, Martha, thou art careful and " troubled about many things ; but one thing is needful, " and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not " be taken away from her." But our Lord loved Martha as well as Mary. He knew her frame: he saw kindness reigned in her heart, and that she was no less attached to him than her sister, though she had mistaken the best way of shewing her esteem. And hence we should do well to observe two things.

First. That the real followers of Jesus, may have their peculiarities, their mistakes, their imperfections. Christians are new creatures. They really differ from others, and the general tenor of their lives shews that they " have not received the spirit of the world, but the " spirit which is of God." But they feel infirmities; and too frequently give proof to those around them that they are renewed but in part. We do not mean to plead for sin—but it is obvious from the history of the first disciples of our Lord and Saviour—that while the grace of God has a holy influence, it seldom if ever changes the constitutional complexion—and that while it sanctifies the powers of human nature, it does not give us new ones. It renders the possessor open to conviction, *and makes him willing* to retract when he has done *amiss, but it does* not lay him under an impossibility of

doing wrong. Hence a diversity of character ir church of God. Hence a variety of degrees ir spiritual life. Hence blemishes mixed with exce cies and defects rendered the more observable by neighbourhood of some very praise-worthy qualiti the same individual. And hence, while religion pears to be divine in its origin and its tendency can easily discern that it is human in its residence its exercise.

Secondly. We should learn to esteem and value perfect goodness. Yea, an old divine goes further, says, " we should love one another, not as saints bu " sinners." Not that we are to love sin, or cea reprove for it—this is not his meaning—but he w intimate that we are to be tender and pitiful ; tha are to consider ourselves, lest we also be tempted ; we are not to be indiscriminate in our censures, bu praise as far we can—that the strong are to bear th firmities of the weak, and not please themselves. " " who hath despised the day of small things ? Be " the shepherd of Israel: he gathers the lambs witl " arm, and carries them in his bosom, and gently l " those that are with young. Behold the Lord mi " in battle: a bruised reed shall he not break, a " smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send f " judgment unto victory." Behold the sufferer ir garden of Gethsemane ; he compassionately apolog for the infirmities of his followers—" what could y " watch with me one hour? The spirit indeed is " ling but the flesh is weak. Be ye followers of hi " dear children." Remember he loved *Martha* as as *Mary and Lazarus.*

But II. How did he love them. I answer—*friend*—and as a *Saviour.* First. Love is a passic human nature. It shone forth in our Saviour with culiar partiality. This is to be explained by the geniality peculiar to certain dispositions by which *immediately* attract each other and unite. Though *humanity of* our Lord was real, it was also, sin

and as his mind was perfectly free from every improper bias, doubtless nothing engaged the preference of his regard, but what was virtuous and of good report.—The vicious, the sceptical, the worldly minded, we may be assured had no charms for him, whatever were their accomplishments. There is one thing we may learn from this part of his example, viz. to justify the partiality of friendship. He would not have us to shut up our bowels of compassion against any of our fellow creatures —we are to do good as we have opportunity unto all men: but he teaches us by his own practice that we are not bound to take every one into our bosom. We are at liberty to choose and select. Our Lord regarded all the apostles, but John is called *the disciple whom Jesus loved.* He was kind to all his followers; but it is said *now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.* But to *know Christ after the flesh*, and to enjoy his peculiar affection under the advantage of his human nature, was a privilege confined to few.

There is therefore, secondly, another sense in which he loved Martha, and Mary, and Lazarus, and in which also he has loved us. It is with the divine love of a Saviour: a love which existed long before we had a being: a love which sprang from no excellency in us, but was entirely self-derived. A love not only the most undeserved, but the most costly and powerful. It led him to undertake our cause, to assume our nature, to suffer and die for us. "He bore our sins in his own "body, on the tree that we being dead to sins, might "live unto righteousness, by whose stripes we are healed. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay "down his life for his friend," but he has discovered a greater, he laid down his life for enemies—he "died for "the ungodly: while we were yet sinners Christ dieth "for us." The same love gave us the gospel, called us by his grace, pardoned all our sins for his name's sake. And the same love will perform all our reasonable desires; make "all things work together for our good; "*and keep us by his power*, through faith, unto salva-

" tion ready to be revealed in the last time." But this leads us

III. To observe the manner in which he expressed his love to these three favoured individuals. Every thing is not recorded ; But several circumstances are noticed which will prove instructive and useful.

First he visited them. This interview was doubtless often refreshing to our Lord himself. While " foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests, the " son of man had not where to lay his head ;" he had no house, nor room of his own ; and we have reason to believe, that sometimes at least, after preaching much, and journeying far, he was destitute of acccommodations. Once we read that " he went up into a mountain, and continued there all night in prayer to God." In another instance we find him so wearied as to be able *to sleep in the hinder part* of a fishing vessel, even *in a storm*. But some knew his value, and ministered to him of their substance. At the house of Martha he was always welcome. And we may be assured, that he was a guest that always paid for his entertainment. He honored them more than they could favor him. Who can imagine the happiness of Lazarus and his sisters when they received the Lord of life and glory under their roof! O! to have heard him bless the food ; to have heard him perform family worship ; to have heard him discourse! He was " fairer than the children of " men; grace was poured into his lips. Never man " spake like this man." With what joy would Martha and her sister and Lazarus think of such visits in prospect : how long would they furnish matter for conversation, and remark afterwards! How unwilling would they be to lose him: how earnestly would they press his stay! Though removed from this world, as to his bodily presence he will be with his people essentially, spiritually, peculiarly to the end of time. He visits them now. " He that hath my commandments, and " keepeth them, he it is that loveth me : and he that " *loveth me shall be* loved of my father, and I will love

n, and will manifest myself to him. Say not, Lord w is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and t unto the world? Judas—not Iscariot—once ask- him this question: and he answered and said un- him, if a man love me, he will keep my words, and r father will love him, and we will come unto him, d make our abode with him.

condly. His love admitted of their suffering af- on. Disease invades the family; *Lazarus is sick:* the sickness of the brother is the distress of the rs; they are filled with anguish, anxiety, and alarm. love could have hindered all this; and probably should have thought that it *would* have done it— rely he will exempt friends he so highly regards m every thing trying and disagreeable."—But his ghts are not as our thoughts, neither are his ways ur ways. His love is wise; it seeks our everlast- velfare; it does not take pleasure in our pain, but es in our profit: and though "no chastening for present seemeth to be joyous but grievous, nev- heless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of hteousness unto them that are exercised thereby." may therefore share in his affection and be severe- ed relatively, or in your own persons. A Laza- beloved of Jesus, sickens and dies. "As many as ove, I rebuke and chasten. When the Lord lov- he chasteneth and scourgeth every son whom he ceiveth."

at, Thirdly. His love suffered him in their dis- to treat them with apparent neglect. As soon as arus was seized "his sisters sent unto him saying, rd behold he whom thou lovest is sick." But in- of sending an answer, or repairing instantly to any, it is said, "when he heard therefore that he s sick, he abode two days still in the same place ere he was." And before he sets off, Lazarus is ! A friend is born for adversity—then we pecu- *need his presence*, his assistance, his council, his *athy: and Jesus was their friend.* How then is

" Come shed abroad a Saviour's love,
" And that shall kindle our's."

And they that seek me early shall find me. For there are some who cannot say with confidence, " I do love " him." But their " desire is to the Lord, and to the " remembrance of his name. They mourn for sin. " They hunger and thirst after righteousness." They go on praying—*O! that I may win Christ!* These are earnestly seeking him, and they shall find him—find him as *the pearl of great price*—find him to pardon, and sanctify, and keep—find him here in all the supplies of grace, and hereafter in all the treasure of glory.

But O ye young! the promise has the most favorable reference to you. You can seek him *early*, not only as it implies earnestly, but as it more naturally means betimes. And though all who seek him shall find, *you* shall find him *peculiarly*. It is better to have a guide at the beginning, than after we have long gone astray and lost much of our time and strength for the journey. If invaluable privileges attend religion, the sooner they are embraced the more advantage we shall derive from them. The Saviour is peculiarly pleased with your early devotedness to him. He considers himself more honored by these voluntary offerings of the first fruits, than by the constrained services of worn-out age : and *them that honor him he will honor.* And in every future period of life, in every distress, in every danger, in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment, he will say—*I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth.*

DISCOURSE IX.

THE SIGHT OF CHRISTIAN FRIENDS ENLIVENING.

And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii-forum, and the three taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.—Acts xxviii. 15.

THE case was this. From the malice of his countrymen, Paul had *appealed unto Cæsar*. He was therefore under the necessity of going to Rome. In his voyage he was shipwrecked on the island of Melita, now called Malta, and which has been of late as well as in earlier times so famous. After continuing there three months, he renewed his voyage, landed at Puteoli, not far from Naples, and went towards Rome. At Rome there were *brethren*, and when they heard of his approach, they went down to "meet him as far as Ap-"pii-forum and the three taverns"—This did them honor; it marked their zeal and their kindness, but observe the effect of the interview on the mind of the apostle.—"Whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and "took courage."

This teaches us, first, that characters the most distinguished in the church of God, may sometimes need encouragement. What made the apostle now droop, we cannot determine. Perhaps he had heard what a tiger Nero had lately became; perhaps he began to feel some melancholy thoughts respecting the result of his trial. To appear before the emperor of the world in the presence of a thousand spectators was enough to make no

ture shudder—and there is nature as well as grace, and there are animal spirits, as well as religious principles in the best.

Whatever was the cause it seems the apostle was now depressed and desponding—even he who in his epistle to the Romans could say "if God be for us, who can "be against us; nay, in all these things we are more "than conquerors through him that loved us"—even he discovers a dejection of mind, and a failure of courage.

People often imagine that the saints recorded in the scripture were a race of men entirely different from modern christians. But this is a mistake. Even *they* found themselves in an enemy's country; *they* travelled also through a vale of tears, pierced with thorns and briars—without were fightings, and within were fears. Our case therefore is not peculiar—we neither sigh nor tremble alone. Where are the hands which never hang down; the knees which never become feeble? "Zion "said the Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath "forgotten me. Asaph said my soul refused to be "comforted: I remembered God and was troubled; I "complained and my spirit was overwhelmed. David "said my soul cleaveth to the dust. And Paul ex-"claimed, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver "me from the body of this death." If such was the experience of characters so pre-eminent—what wonder that we are liable to the same exercises?

Secondly. Let us observe the benefit that is to be derived from intercourse with christian friends. When Paul saw these brethren, he was inspired with new life; he dropped his melancholy gloom, and marched forward with confidence and joy—*he took courage*——"Oint-"ment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the "sweetness of a man's friend by hearty council. Iron "sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the counte-"tenance of his friend."

In no condition is it "good for man to be alone." *Religion instead of* destroying the social principle, re-

and strengthens it. Our Saviour has promised " where two or three are gathered together in his me, he will be in the midst of them." To cheer animate each other " he sent forth his disciples two d two before his face. Two are better than one—for they fall, the one will lift up his fellow; but woe to n that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not other to help him up."

ave you ever been in distress? How soothing was resence of a tender and a pious friend? Such a on was *a ministering spirit*—an expositor of the ise, " the Lord will strengthen him upon the bed languishing, thou wilt make all his bed in his sick- ss." Have you ever been in spiritual darkness perplexity?—you sighed, " no one was ever like e!" But a christian related his experience, and unced the same feelings, and you were set at liber- Or have you in a scorching day been ready to h for thirst? Like another angel, in the case of ar, " he opened your eyes, and shewed you a well" nd you " went on your way rejoicing." God of race, whatever thou art pleased to deny us while in world, withhold not from us a christian friend— who will council us in our doubts, comfort us in sorrows, animate us by his example, and encourage y his confidence.

ow pleasing is it when travelling to heaven, to over- those who will be " our companions in tribulation, d in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ?" overjoyed is a christian to find some followers of amb when he has entered a town or a village say- with Abraham, " surely the fear of God is not in s place!" It has enlivened him—" well there are re that love and serve my Lord and Saviour than magined." What a glow of satisfaction does a called by divine grace diffuse in a church when he s in to ask for communion and fellowship with —" They that fear thee will be glad when they see *because I have* hoped in thy word." How de-

sirable is the Lord's day, and the Lord's house, in which we see so many of our brethren?

> " Lord how delightful 'tis to see
> " A whole assembly worship thee;
> " At once they sing, at once they pray,
> " They hear of heaven and learn the way?"

How charming will heaven be, where we shall see them all!

Thirdly, let us remark that we may be edified by those who are below us in station, in talents, and in grace. Thus these private christians helped an inspired apostle.—" When he saw them he thanked God and " took courage. Apollos was an eloquent man, and " mighty in the scriptures," but he was " taught the " way of the Lord more perfectly," by two of his hearers, *Priscilla and Aquilla.* Naaman the Syrian was a mighty man, but he was indebted for his cure to a little maid. She had been taken captive in war, and waited upon Naaman's wife, and " she said unto her mistress, would " God my Lord were with the prophet that is in Sama- " ria! for he would recover him of his leprosy. The " king is served by the labor of the field."

Let us learn then that there is no such thing as independence—that there is a connection among men which embraces all ranks and degrees—and a dependence founded upon it, so that no being is above the want of assistance, and no being is useless or unimportant. It is in the world, and it is in the church as it is in the human frame. " But now hath God set the members " every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him " —and the eye cannot say unto the hand I have no " need of thee; nor again, the head to the feet, I have " no need of you—that there should be no schism in " in the body; but that the members should have the " same care one for another."

Lastly. All the comfort and advantage we derive from creatures, should awaken gratitude to God.—It is *said he thanked God.* Doubtless the Apostle was sensi-

ble of his obligations to these brethren, and thanked *them* for their civility, and tenderness in coming unasked, so far to meet him—But says the man alive to God; who made these christian friends? who inclined them to favor me? who rendered them the means of restoring my soul? "Of him, and through him, and to him, "are all things. To whom be glory for ever. Amen."

"Do not err my beloved brethren. Every good "gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh "down from the father of lights, with whom is no va- "riableness, neither shadow of turning." He uses pipes to convey blessings to us, but all our springs are in him. The heathens made gods of every thing that afforded them pleasure, and we are too prone to do the same. Instruments sometimes intercept the praise that is going to be offered to God; and when this is the case, he often lays them aside or renders them useless—for the divine jealousy will not endure a rival.

And here is the difference between a carnal and a spiritual mind. The man who possesses the former, lives without God in the world. Though the divine perfections surround him, and a thousand voices continually address him, he walks on all carelessness and insensibility. Whereas the christian is disposed to acknowledge God in all his ways. The stream leads him to the fountain. The gift reminds him of the giver. The instrument of the agent. He holds communion with God in common things and is thankful for common mercies. He sees and adores him in the springing of the earth, in the rain, and fruitful showers, in the refreshments of sleep, and in the pleasures of friendship.—He grieves with Bishop Leighton that "a "world so full of his mercy should be so empty of his "praise." He cries with David, "O that men would "praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonder- "ful works to the children of men. Bless the Lord all "his works in all places of his dominion: bless the "Lord, O my soul." Which of these characters do *we resemble?*

DISCOURSE X.

THE CHRISTIAN INDEED!

(BEFORE THE LORD'S SUPPER.)

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.—Gal. ii. 20.

IT has been said by an old divine, "that if religion be "any thing, it is every thing; if it be important at all, "it is all important." And indeed if it be impartially considered, with regard to prosperity or adversity, life or death, time or eternity, it will appear to be in the eye of reason, as well as in the testimony of scripture, *the one thing needful.* Hence it becomes necessary to know wherein it consists—to examine its qualities and its effects. A fuller representation of genuine religion was perhaps never given than we have in the words before us—for you will observe that the inspired writer does not here speak of himself as an apostle, but as a christian, and therefore that what he describes as his own experience, will apply to all the subjects of divine grace. It leads us to consider—the true characters—the grand principle—and the allowed confidence of real religion.

First. Let us attentively observe the several characters here given us of true godliness, and see whether we have any thing like them in ourselves. Now says Paul, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, "*yet not I, but* Christ liveth in me."

It has then a character of *mystery*, of *wonder*, or shall I say *paradox*. How strange is it to see *a bush burning with fire, and unconsumed.* How marvellous is it to find that the poor only are rich, the sick only are well, and that a broken heart is the greatest blessing we can enjoy. How surprising is it to hear persons saying, we are "sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; having nothing, "and yet possessing all things, as dying, and behold we "live"—to hear a man say, *I am crucified*, though he has the use of all his limbs—crucified *with* Christ, though Christ had been crucified on Calvary long before —and to add *nevertheless I live*—then with the same breath to check himself, and deny this, *yet not I*—and to crown the whole, *Christ liveth in me*, though he was then in heaven! What unintelligible jargon is all this to the carnal mind? "For the natural man understand-"eth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are "foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, be-"cause they are spiritually discerned." A christian is *a wonder unto many.* How absurd, and ridiculous did all this once appear to us—but it is our mercy that the darkness is past and the true light now shineth—that we begin to perceive beauty and harmony, and worth, where once nothing struck us but confusion, and discord, and insignificance—that we can say with the man in the gospel, *one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see.*

It has a character of *mortification. I am crucified with Christ.* The grace of God has to pull up, as well as sow; to destroy as well as build. It has much to kill in us—it has to kill our vain confidence, our self-righteous hopes, our pride, our depraved affections. It finds us alive to the world and to sin, and it leaves us dead to both. To die to any thing in the language of scripture is to have no more connection with it, no more attachment to it: "how shall we that are dead to sin, "live any longer therein"—if we were alive to it, we might be enticed—but what are allurements presented *to a dead corpse?* "Knowing this, that our old man is

" crucified with him, that the body of sin might be de-
" stroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin:
" For he that is dead is freed from sin." It has no more dominion over him; he loves it no longer.

But to crucify, is not only to destroy, it signifies a peculiar kind of death.—A violent, unnatural death—and sin never dies of its own accord, or from weakness, or from age; it must be put to death by force.—It signifies a painful death—think of a body fastened to a tree, suspended in torture, nails driven thro the hands and feet, parts so susceptible of pain, by reason of the concurrence of nerves and sinews—who was ever crucified without anguish? Whoever was a christian without difficulty, self-denial, sacrifices, and groans, and tears? Though crucifixion was a sure death, it was a slow and lingering one. And our corruptions though doomed to be destroyed, are not dispatched at once. We shall have to mortify the deeds of the body as long as we are here: but sin is nailed to the cross, and shall never gain an ascendancy over us again: its death is inevitable.

It has a character of *life—nevertheless I live.* And life brings evidence along with it. " I compare," says the believer " my present with my former dispositions.
" —I was once dead to a certain class of objects, for
" they could no more affect me, than natural things can
" impress a dead body—but now for the very same rea-
" son I know that I am alive—because they do impress
" me; they do interest me; they do excite in me hopes
" and fears; I am susceptible of spiritual joys and sor-
" rows; I live, for I breathe prayer and praise; I live,
" for I feel the pulse of sacred passions; I live, for I
" have appetites, and do hunger and thirst after righte-
" ousness; I live, for I walk, and I work, and though
" all my efforts betray weakness they prove life: I
" live." A real christian is not a picture—a picture may accurately resemble an original, but it wants life; *it has eyes, but it* sees not—lips, but it speaks not. A *christian is not a figure*; you may take materials, and

make up the figure of a man, and give it the various parts of the human body, and even make them move—by wires—but a christian is not moved in religion by machinery, but life.—Nothing is forced and artificial.

Why is religion so burdensome to many? The reason is, they have nothing in them to render these things like the functions of life, natural and easy—hence they drudge and toil on, often exclaiming, what a weariness it is to serve the Lord—and drop one thing after another till they give up the whole. But where there is spiritual life, there is an inward propensity to holiness, there is a savoring the things which be of God; there is nothing of that ignoble and slavish devotion which springs from custom, or is impelled by external motives only—they find his service to be perfect freedom; his yoke easy—and his burden light; such a burden as a pair of wings to a bird: they would be awkward, and troublesome, and useless if tied on, but as living parts of his body, they are graceful and pleasing, and the instruments of flight towards heaven.

It has a character of *humility*.—*Yet not I*—This is the unvarying strain of the apostle. "Not by fleshly "wisdom, but by the grace of God we have our con- "versation in the world. By the grace of God I am what "I am; and his grace which was bestowed upon me, "was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than "they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was "with me. I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, "therewith to be content; I know both how to be "abased, and I know how to abound: every where, "and in all things, I am instructed both to be full, and "to be hungry; both to abound, and to suffer need—I "can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth "me."

Compare with this language the sentiments of the pagan philosophers. Take one as a specimen of the rest. Cicero says "we are justly applauded for virtue, "and in virtue we rightly glory, which would not be "*the case if we had* virtue as the gift of God, and not

" from ourselves. Did any person ever give thanks " to God that he was a good man? No; but we thank " him that we are rich, that we are honorable, that we " are in health and safety." Now this argues not only the most dreadful pride, but the grossest ignorance, and it would be easy to prove that goodness is much less from ourselves than any thing else. The material creation has not such degrees of dependence upon God as the animal; the animal world has not such degrees of dependence upon God as the rational: and rational beings have not such degrees of dependence upon God as pure and holy beings; beings reconciled from rebellion, renewed from depravity, and preserved all weakness as they are in the midst of temptation. Penetrate heaven—there *they cast their crowns at the feet* of their deliverer, and acknowledge that if they reign at all, it is by mere favor. This disposition must enter us before we can enter heaven. " He that abaseth " himself shall be exalted; but he that exalteth him- " self shall be abased." Dependence is the only proper condition of a creature, especially of a fallen creature, and the gospel is designed and adapted to produce self-annihilation that " no flesh should glory in his presence, " but that according as it is written, he that glorieth, " let him glory in the Lord."

Finally, it has a *christian* character—but *Christ liveth in me.* This life is indeed formally in me; I am the subject of it, but not the agent. It is not self-derived, or self-maintained: but it comes from him, and is so perfectly sustained by him, that it seems better to say —not *I live*, but *Christ liveth in me.*

He has a sovereign empire of grace founded in his death, and he quickens whom he will. He is our life—not only as he procures it by redemption, but also as he produces it by regeneration; and he liveth in us as the sun lives in the garden, by his influence calling forth fragrance and fruits; or as the soul lives in the body, *actuating every* limb, and penetrating every particle.

Let us, secondly, consider the grand influencing

principle of this religion—*It is the faith of the Son of God.* "If you ask," says the christian, "how it is that "I live so different from others, and so different from "my former self, here is the secret.—There is a faith "which has immediately and entirely to do with the "Son of God: of this faith I have been made the hap- "py partaker, and in proportion as I can exercise this, "I do well—this brings me supplies from his boundless "fullness; this places me in the strong hold; this in- "vigorates duty; this alleviates affliction; this purifies "the heart; this overcomes the world; this does all. "By faith I stand—by faith I walk;—by faith I live— "and the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the "faith of the Son of God."

To explain this, it will be necessary to observe that the communication of grace from Christ to maintain the divine life depends on union with him, and that of this union faith is the medium. Let me make this plain. It is well known that animal spirits and nervous juices are derived from the head to the body, but then it is only to that particular body that is united to it. And the same may be said of the vine—the vine conveys a prolific sap, but it is exclusively to its own branches. It matters not how near you place branches to the stock, if they are not *in it*, they may as well be a thousand miles off; they cannot be enlivened and fructified by it: "the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it "abide in the vine, no more can we except we abide in "him, for without him we can do nothing." Now he is the head and we are the members; he is the vine, we are the branches.

And this union from which this influence flows, is accomplished by faith only: *he dwells in our hearts by faith.* If faith be an eye, it is only by this we can see him. If faith be a hand it is only by this we can lay hold of him. He is the food of our souls, but it is by faith that this food is converted into aliment: they are his own words: *he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.* Place all the motives of christianity around a

man—if he does not believe them, they cannot touch him; this is the *only* medium by which they can operate. How can the threatenings of our Lord produce fear? How can the promises which he has given excite hope—but by being believed. By this the various parts of the whole system are brought to bear upon the conscience, and the practice—therefore says the apostle, "the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by "the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave "himself for me."

This brings us, thirdly, to notice the confidence, the appropriation which this religion allows. Now what we mean to establish here—is not that every real christian can use this language as boldly as the apostle Paul. Then we should *make* some *sad*, whom God has commanded us to *make merry;* there are degrees in grace; and there is weak faith as well as strong faith.

But I would intimate, first, that genuine religion always produces a concern for this application. It will not suffer a man to rest in distant speculations, and loose generalities, but will make him anxious to bring things home to himself, and to know how they effect *him.* With regard to duty he will say, *Lord* what wilt thou have *me* to do. When he hears of promises and privileges he will ask, am *I* interested in these; may *I* claim them?—say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.

I mean also to intimate, secondly, that a christian may attain this confidence, and draw this conclusion. Let him take God at his word, and from the general language of the gospel, make out a particular inference —thus. He loved sinners, and gave himself for the ungodly. Let those who have no need of a Saviour, stand and debate; I need him; and I see he has come to save sinners, and I am one! To die for the ungodly, and this is my character. I see also that the master calls me and invites me by name, or which is much safer and better, by description; I am oppressed with a *load* and I am tired, struggling to get free; and he says,

" come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, " and I will give you rest."

To enable you to decide this business, let me ask you —Have you not had a view of your last condition by nature and so of your absolute need of Christ?—Have you not discovered his grace, and his glory, in living and dying for you, so as to feel your soul powerfully drawn towards him? Under this attraction have you not been led to apply to him, throwing yourself down at his feet, " here is a blind sinner—be thou my wisdom ; " a guilty sinner—be thou my righteousness ; a pol- " luted sinner—be thou my sanctification ; an enslaved " miserable sinner—be thou my redemption." And do you not feel good as the consequence of this? Is not your mind so filled, so fixed, that you no longer rove after the world ; do you not melt in godly sorrow for sin ; are you not constrained by holy love to the Saviour to say, " speak Lord, for thy servant heareth, " to live, not unto yourselves, but to him that died for " you and rose again!" Where these things are wholly wanting, there is no real faith ; where they are found, a person can be guilty of nothing like presumption, in saying *he loved me, and gave himself for me.*

Thirdly, we would intimate that nothing can exceed the blessedness which results from such an appropriation of the Saviour in his love, and in his death. All evangelical consolation is wrapped up in it. Ah! could each of you make it your own—How would eternity be disarmed of its dread? With what composure would you look forward to death? How cheerfully would you bear your trials? How pleasant would all your worship prove? With what lively and suitable feelings would you approach this morning the table of the Lord, where a dying Jesus is not only presented to your faith, but to your very sight, *evidently set forth, crucified among you?*

He loved me, and gave himself for me! O my soul, think of these words. The *Son of God*, higher than the *kings of the earth*, the Lord of all, he has condescend-

ed to remember me in my low estate—He has *loved* me—and O! How marvellous the expression of this love—he gave—nothing less than *himself*—to be my teacher and example only—? No, but to be my substitute, my ransom; to bear my sins in his own body on the tree. And all this goodness regards unworthy, unlovely—*me*.

Did he love me, and shall I not love him? Has he given himself for me, *an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savor*—and shall I be unwilling to give myself to him *a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is my reasonable service?* And O my soul, rejoice in him. What may I not expect from his hands? What will he deny, who did not withhold himself?

DISCOURSE XI.

THE FINAL CHANGE.

(EASTER.)

Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. —1 Cor. xv. 51, 52.

HERE a scene opens upon us, in comparison with which, every thing else becomes worthless, little, uninteresting. And let me tell you—

It is a transaction in which you will be, not merely spectators, but parties concerned.

It is an event the most certain.

It is a solemnity that is continually drawing near. For while I speak you die—and *after death the judgment!* Does not this subject therefore deserve, as well as demand your most serious attention?

The chapter before us regards the resurrection.—But those only can be raised who *die*—what shall become of those, who at this awful period shall be alive? "Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, "but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the "twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trum-"pet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorrupt-"ible, and we shall be changed."

Here we may observe, first, the union there is among the followers of the redeemer. Christians however *distinguished* from each other, are inhabitants of one

country, brethren of one family, members of one body. They are influenced by the same spirit, and are travelling the same road. Diversity of circumstances, peculiarity of religious discipline, remoteness of situation, distance of time do not affect the relation that unites them all together.—The apostle looks forward to the end of all things, and says, *we* who are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them who are asleep.—Then *we*, who are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall *we* ever be with the Lord.—*We* shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.

Of the number of this universal church, some *die*, but the representation that is given us of their death is very pleasing—*they sleep*. Death is often an alarming subject, even to christians: to reduce this dread they would do well to endeavour to view it under those images, by which the scripture has expressed it—a departure—a going home—a sleep. Man is called to labor. He goes forth in the morning, toils with some little intermission all the day, and in the evening retires and lays himself down to sleep—and *the sleep of a laboring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much*. And such is every christian; they have much to do; and they must do it *while it is day, for the night cometh, wherein no man can work*. Death brings them repose: *they rest from their labors*. Sleep is a state from which you may be easily awakened. You look at the babe in the cradle; he neither sees you, nor hears you; but you feel no uneasiness on this account; by and by the senses will be unlocked, and he will be taken up smiling and refreshed. *Our friend Lazarus sleepeth*, says the Saviour, *but I go that I may awake him out of sleep*. And he called, *Lazarus come forth*, and though he had been dead four days, he heard and came. From his throne in glory, Jesus the resurrection and the life, looks down on the mansions of the dead, and at the appointed time will say to the heavenly hosts, our friends are sleep-

ing in the dust—attend—I go to awake them out of sleep: and lo! "all that are in their graves hear his "voice, and come forth!"

Thus far the laws of mortality prevail.—Death *is the way of all the earth*; yes and of all the righteous too, and this will continue to be the case to the end—but then many will be found *alive*. The language of the apostle is instructive. The present system is unquestionably to be destroyed, but it will not wax old and perish through corruption. All the productions of the earth will be as fair as ever. The inhabitants of the earth will not be gradually consumed till none are left. The world will be full, and all the common concerns of life will be pursued with the same eagerness as before. And "as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it "be also in the days of the son of man. They did "eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given "in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the "ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all." Many of the Lord's people too will be found alive, and perhaps they will be much more numerous than at any former period. Now in what manner will these be disposed of? This is what the apostle professes to teach.

Behold, says he, *I shew you a mystery*. He means a secret; something unknown before; unknown to the Corinthians, and it is likely unknown to himself. But probably, while reflecting upon this subject, and thinking what would be the destiny of these that should reach the end of time, he was informed by inspiration, that they should not die, but be transformed.—

We shall all be *changed*. We are always varying now. We never continue in one stay; what vicissitudes do we experience in the lapse of a few years in our conditions, in our connections, in our very frame. But what a change is here—a change from time to eternity, from earth to heaven, from the company of the wicked, to the presence of the blessed God, from *ignorance to knowledge*, from painful infirmities to be

" presented faultless before the presence of his glory " with exceeding joy." But the change principally refers to the body. " For flesh and blood cannot inherit " the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit " incorruption." Enoch and Elias carried their bodies along with them to heaven—but though they did not die, they passed through a change in the consequence equal to death. The same change which will be produced in the dead by the resurrection, will be accomplished in the bodies of the living by this transformation; and of this we have the clearest assurance: "so " is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in cor- " ruption; it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in " dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weak- " ness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body, " it is raised a spiritual body.—As we have borne the " image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of " the heavenly."

—Further, observe the ease and dispatch with which all this will be performed.—" In a moment, in the " twinkling of an eye." What a view does this give us of the dominion and power of God—think of the numbers that will be alive! Think of the inhabitants of one city—of one country—of all the nations of the globe—all these metamorphosed in one instant; immortal even in body, and capable of endless misery, or happiness! And " why should it be thought a thing " incredible?" Who said, " let there be light and " there was light?" Who " spake, and it was done, " commanded, and it stood fast? Is any thing too " hard for the Lord?" Let the work be—what it really is—the greatest of all miracles; we have an agent more than equal to the execution of it: " he shall " change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like " unto his glorious body, according to the working " whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto " himself."

Finally, observe the signal:—" at the last trump; for " *the trumpet shall* sound, and the dead shall be raised

" incorruptible, and we shall be changed!" When the Lord came down on Horeb to publish the law, " the " voice of the trumpet waxed exceeding loud." By the sound of the trumpet the approach of kings has been announced. Trumpets have been used in war. Judges in our country enter the place of assize preceded by the same shrill sound. And those who have witnessed the procession well know what an awe it impresses, and what sentiments it excites—all feel, even those who are not to be tried, catch a powerful sympathy—but O the condition of the poor prisoners whose fate hangs in suspence and is now going to be decided!—What are their agitations, and forebodings when they hear the judge is entering—But here is a trumpet whose clangor will be heard for thousands of miles—louder than a million thunders—which will awaken all the dead, and change all the living—cause heaven and earth to flee away—and leave us all before the judge of the universe!

And what says Peter in reference to all this?—" Wherefore beloved, seeing that ye look for such " things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in " peace, without spot, and blameless." Can you be indifferent to any of your actions when they are recorded in the book of his remembrance, and will be published before an assembled world? What you are doing now you are doing forever. It is a light thing to know how you are to be disposed of for a few months or a few years—what is to become of you when you go hence, and are seen no more? It signifies very little whether you class with the rich or the poor, the learned or the illiterate, the honorable or the despised—the question is—in what rank will you be found, when " before him " shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate " them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his " sheep from the goats?" Will that trumpet call you to " lamentation, and mourning, and woe," or will its language be, " lift up your heads with joy, for your re- " demption draweth nigh?"

He who will then be the judge is now the Saviour.

He will then say to the wicked, *depart*—but blessed be his name, he does not say so now to any—His language is *come*. "Come," says he, "come unto me all ye "that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you "rest. Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise "cast out."

And this reminds me of another trumpet, of which Isaiah speaks in these striking words; "it shall come "to pass in that day that the great trumpet shall be "blown, and they shall come which were ready to pe- "rish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the "land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy "mount at Jerusalem." *This* trumpet you have heard. But alas, how have you heard it? This "grace of "God bringeth salvation"—has it taught you "that "denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, you should "live soberly and righteously, and godly in the present "world, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious "appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus "Christ?" O let the judgment trumpet awaken your attention to the gospel trumpet, and may the latter prepare you for the former. Amen.

DISCOURSE XII.

RELIGIOUS THINGS, PLEASANT THINGS.

(LORD's DAY EVENING.)

Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned up with fire: and all our pleasant things are laid waste.—Isaiah lxiv. 11.

THUS spake these pious jews—and we may consider the words either as expressing an affliction or as discovering a disposition.

The captivity had destroyed all their civil and sacred institutions. The temple was a magnificent building, endeared by a thousand claims—but now it exhibited to the passing eye only a scene of ruins; their *holy and beautiful house was burnt with fire.* One circumstance could not fail to touch and impress their minds—it was the place *where their fathers praised him.* What a veneration does an edifice acquire that has stood for ages the sanctuary of devotion, and in which successive generations have worshipped God! What a solemn thought it is, that we occupy seats once filled by those who have gone "the way of all the earth! "The fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do "they live forever?" And we are "accomplishing as "an hireling our day," and are making room for our children. Here they heard his word, called upon his name, sung his praise, offered up prayers, and vows for us!—Their example reproves and alarms us. *They were alive in his service*— does our devotion discover *any degree of seriousness and fervor?* Are we "so

" lowers of them who through faith and patience inherit " the promises?" Shall we one day join our pious ancestors, " and sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob " in the kingdom of God?" Again. " All their plea- " sant things were laid waste"—the sacred utensils employed in the service of God; the offices of the temple; the ministers of the sanctuary; the altar, the table of shew bread, the ark, the pot of manna, Aaron's rod that budded, the cloud of glory, their new moons and sabbaths, the callings of assemblies. This to the pious among the Israelites was a far greater affliction than the loss of all their temporal privileges. Their country was dear to them, but Jerusalem was dearer, and they " lov- " ed the gates of Zion better than all the dwelling pla- " ces of Jerusalem."

This *affliction*, blessed be God, is not our's. Our civil and religious privileges are still continued, and we hope will pass down unimpaired to the latest posterity. But the words discover a *disposition* which will be found to harmonize with the feelings of all the people of God.

What I refer to is this—viz. the manner in which they speak of the service of God, and the exercises of devotion: *our pleasant things*. From hence we observe that *the means of grace; the ordinances of religion are to the Israel of God* PLEASANT THINGS.

In the number of their pleasant things—they include the sanctuary. To them the temple is not a prison, a place of confinement and correction; but it is the house of their heavenly father, their *holy and beautiful house and beautiful* because *holy*. " I was glad when they " said unto me; let us go into the house of the Lord. " For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I " had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, " than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. How amia- " ble are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts."

In the number of their *pleasant things* they include *sabbaths*. To many indeed *God's holy day* is uninviting *and even irksome*: they therefore cry out " what a " weariness it is to the Lord; O when will the

" sabbath be gone, that we may set forth wheat?" pursuing their gain, or finding their own pleasures. But the christian " calls the sabbath a delight, and considers " the holy of the Lord honorable." To him it is a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; a weekly jubilee; and wearied with the toils, and follies, and vexations of the world, he hails a day of seclusion from it; a day that " brings him to God's holy moun- " tain, and makes him joyful in his house of prayer. " This is the day which the Lord hath made, we will " rejoice and be glad in it."

And are not the scriptures some of their *pleasant things?* Job could say, " I have esteemed the words " of his mouth more than my necessary food." David could say, " more to be desired are they than gold, yea, " than much fine gold; sweeter also than the honey and " the honey comb. Jeremiah could say, " thy words " were found and I did eat them, and they were unto " me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." It is the character of a good man, and the pledge of his blessedness; " his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law " doth he meditate day and night; and he shall be like " a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth " forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not " wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

This too will apply to the preaching of the word. The christian does not wish to be always hearing sermons, for he knows that every thing is beautiful in its season, and the claims of duty are numerous and various —but he values opportunities of hearing the glad tidings of salvation; he welcomes the message and the messenger, and exclaims " how beautiful are the feet of them " that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings " of good things!" And though their trials be many, " and the Lord gives them the bread of adversity, and " the water of affliction," *yet* they find an ample compensation and relief in this—" that their eyes behold " *their teachers*, and their ears hear a voice behind them " *saying, this is* the way, walk ye in it, when they tur

" aside to the right hand, and when they turn to the " left."

They find it a pleasant thing to approach God in prayer, and to " come before his presence with singing." A pleasant thing to surround his table, and to refresh their minds with the memorials of a Saviour's dying love.—A pleasant thing to be in the circle of pious friends and to hear from their lips *what God has done for their souls.* These are some of their *pleasant things.*

Let us inquire, secondly, how they became so powerfully attractive? For it is certain, that they are not so universally: by numbers they are not only neglected but despised. Whence then do real christians find them so pleasing?

First, there is in them a suitableness to their dispositions. Thus you know, music charms those who have an ear for it. Money is a pleasant thing to the covetous; honor to the ambitious; scandal to the slanderous. In all these instances there is something that meets the taste; and that which gratifies, always delights. So it is here. " That which is born of the " flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is " spirit. They that are after the flesh do mind the " things of the flesh; but they that are after the spirit, " the things of the spirit." The pleasure of the christian does not depend upon persuasion—but inclination: he is not merely told that the provisions of the gospel are good, but he has a spiritual relish: since he is a *new creature*, he has new appetites, and " hungers and " thirsts after righteousness."

Experience however, is another source of this pleasure. We are attached to books which have afforded us peculiar satisfaction. The kindnesses of friends endear them. A spring, which in a scorching day, and when we were ready to expire, yields us a refreshing supply, will be thought of with pleasure. The new born babe is at first urged by a natural instinct, but afterwards *it cries for the breast*—not only from a sense of want, *but an experience of relief* and pleasure. So it is with

the christian. He has found these things to be good for him. Having "tasted that the Lord is gracious," his language is *Lord evermore give us this bread!* Many do not know what it is to enjoy God in the means of grace; they are not attached to ordinances because they have derived no profit from them. But christians have striking proofs of their beneficial influence in their own experience: they know that in keeping them there is great reward: they remember how they have been owned of God,—at one time by delivering their souls from the power of temptation—at another by filling them with "*all joy and peace in believing*"—and so of the rest. Some seasons and exercises they can review with singular feeling. In these they were "abundantly sa-"tisfied with the fatness of his house:" they were made to "drink of the river of his pleasures. In his light "they saw light." And the memory of these peculiar communications and discoveries makes them long with David "to see his power and his glory as they have "seen him in the sanctuary!"

Continual need also renders them pleasant times. Though the christian hopes the good work is begun in him he feels how far it is from being complete. His deficiences are great and many. Something is lacking to his faith, his hope, his knowledge. Sometimes also he feels decays. His zeal cools into indifference. Earthly things sensualize his mind. He wants to have his convictions renewed; his impressions regenerated. And how are these deficiences to be filled up; these decays to be repaired? Read the promise. "In all places "where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and "I will bless thee. They that wait upon the Lord, "shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with "wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, and "walk and not faint. Draw nigh to God, and he "will draw nigh to you."

Let us now review what we have said—and learn

First, to justify religion from the reproaches of the *world. They will* have it, that the services which re-

ligion demands of us are all slavery and gloom: and they spread this evil report of the good land to check inquirers especially the young. But if you are willing to enter in, *let no man's heart fail him.* The scripture assures us that "her ways are ways of pleasantness, and "all her paths are peace." And "wisdom is justified "of all her children." Those who have tried, and these are the only competent witnesses, instead of complaining of bondage find the Saviour's service to be perfect freedom, and own—especially compared with the yoke of their old master—that "*his commandments are not* "*grievous.*"

Secondly. Let us try ourselves by this rule. A man may want assurance, and still be in a state of safety; but if he be habitually a stranger to pleasure in divine things, and can pass through all the services of religion as a mere formalist, it is an awful proof that "he "has no part nor lot in the matter: his heart is not "right in the sight of God." A number of speculative opinions, cold ceremonies, cheap moralities in which the affections have no share, can never constitute real devotion. "The Lord looketh to the heart." He does not value those exercises which are performed from necessity; unwillingly; grudgingly. He abhors the sacrifices of those who are glad of excuses to keep them from his worship; who would be thankful were he entirely to dispense with their services; who feel him as a task-master while they are performing the drudgery of his work. The question is—are spiritual things *your pleasant things?* If not, you are destitute of the mark of a real christian, and you have a poor prospect before you in eternity. God will not drag you into heaven to make you miserable; but miserable you would be, even in heaven, in your present state. The nature and duration of its employments—an eternal sabbath—a temple in which you shall serve him day and night—an intercourse only with those who are perfectly *pure* and holy—all this would be intolerable to an un-

renewed mind, who is "saying to God, depart from us, "we desire not the knowledge of thy ways."

Thirdly. What an affliction do christians sustain when they are deprived of their *pleasant things!* This may be done two ways. First by removing these privileges from them. Thus persecution has sometimes forbidden them to assemble together, and has silenced their preachers, destroyed their sanctuaries, and banished all religious ordinances from a neighborhood. God sometimes inflicts his judgments upon a place for neglect and abuse of gospel privileges. He can send a more dreadful dearth than *a famine of bread*, even *a famine of hearing the words of the Lord.* He can as easily convey an evangelical ministry from one country to another, as we can carry a candle from one room into another:—"I will remove thy candlestick out of his "place, except thou repent." Or, secondly, by removing christians from these privileges. Thus business may call them away from a favored situation; accidents or sickness may detain them prisoners from the courts of the Lord. And though in these cases he does not leave them comfortless, still they feel their loss,—and say, "when I remember these things, I pour out my "soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude, I "went with them to the house of God, with the voice "of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holiday."

Let us, fourthly, be very thankful that these *pleasant things* are within our reach—that we have been so long favored with them—that we have them in rich abundance—that we have liberty to partake of them, and strength to go forth, and enjoy them—surely "the "lines are fallen to us in pleasant places, yea we have "a goodly heritage. Let us enter his gates with "thanksgiving, and his courts with praise."

And finally, let us raise our thoughts and desires after *the pleasant things* of heaven. Philip Henry often said when he had finished the delightful exercises of the sabbath, "well, if this be not the way to heaven, I "*know not what is.*" Yes, these are introductory to

the glory that shall be revealed: they are foretastes to endear it, and earnests to insure it. And when you come to die—if you can say in sincerity, "Lord, I have "loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where "thy honor dwelleth"—you may plead with confidence "gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with "bloody men." He will not gather you in eternity with those you never loved in time—*being let go* you shall join *your own company*, and be for *ever with the Lord*.—And if the streams be so sweet, what will the fountain be? "In his presence there is fulness of joy, "and at his right hand there are pleasures for ever "more." Let us sing—

"These are the joys he lets us know
"In fields and villages below;
"Gives us a relish of his love,
"But keeps his noblest feast above."

"In paradise within the gates,
"A higher entertainment waits;
"Fruits new and old, laid up in store,
"Where we shall feed, but thirst no more."

DISCOURSE XIII.

NEARNESS TO THE CROSS.

Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son. Then saith he to the disciple, behold thy mother. And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.—John xix. 25, 26, 27.

THIS is one of the most remarkable passages in the history of our Saviour's passion. The language is peculiarly simple and affecting. The scene is exquisitely tender. The characters are in the highest degree interesting—and the circumstances in which they are placed, altogether new and wonderful. O for a class of feelings becoming the subject!—Let us fix our minds on three things. First. The situation of the mother. Secondly. The address of the Saviour. Thirdly. The obedience of the disciple.

Women are more than once brought forward in the gospel, and the notice taken of them is always to their honor. Thus while others have forsaken him and fled, we here find three females rising above the fears of their sex, braving the horrors of the execution, piercing through the crowd, and approaching the foot of the cross—there to testify their sympathy with their suffering Lord—to shew how willing they are to die with him—to admire his patience, and his meekness—and to secure his dying words. "Now there stood by the "cross of Jesus, his mother, and his mother's sister,

" Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene." What were the feelings of these three Marys! But—

I. The mother of our Lord in this situation demands a larger share of our notice. I admire in her the efficacy of divine grace. She is able to *stand* near the cross: she does not faint away, and drop down. She keeps her feelings within due bounds—here are no outrageous exclamations, no bitter complaints flung at heaven for not avenging him of his adversaries, no bitter imprecations on his murderers, no rending of garments, no wringing of hands, no plucking off the hair. She feels as a mother, she endures as a christian, and submitting to the mysterious designs of providence, suffers with all the dignity of an angel.

The people of God know not what they can bear till they are tried. When the *time of need* comes, then comes *the grace to help*, and it is always found to be sufficient for them. I shall never despair of the support of a christian in any situation however distressing, after beholding Mary standing near the cross of her dying son.—Ye tender mothers, who may be called to part with beloved children! religion allows you to feel —but forbids you to faint: you are not to be swallowed up of over-much sorrow, but to preserve a calm of mind favorable to the exercises of reason and of grace. You are to endeavor to say " it is the Lord, let him do " what seemeth him good: The Lord gave, and the " Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the name of the " Lord." Think of Mary—and say, " what can my " affliction be compared with her's."

For who can adequately imagine her anguish!—When old Simeon saw the infant Messiah, he said to his mother, " yea and a sword shall pierce through thy " own soul also!" And now the prediction is accomplished.—O! to see her son enduring *such* a death! Suspended in torture! O! how would she agonize when she saw the nails driven through his hands and *feet!* And then for *such a son* to endure all this *extreme of anguish!*—A child foretold by prophets, an-

nounced by angels! all goodness, excellency, perfection!—who had never displeased her, but endeared himself by every word and action!—A child, the glory of her house, the consolation of her age—for to crown all, she was now a widow! Joseph her husband was dead, but Jesus her son was yet alive, and in his power and kindness she was sure to find a resource. But now her remaining prop is struck away, and her *only coal in Israel is quenched!* And she is to be thrown out a bereaved, exposed, helpless, pennyless widow, upon a selfish, unfeeling, cruel world!

II. In such a condition, and with such prospects, she attracts the eye of our Lord; and he speaks. He addresses her in a manner suited to her trying circumstances. "When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and "the disciple standing by whom he loved—he saith "unto his mother—Woman, Behold thy son! Though "I die, there is one who will discharge the filial office; "who will guard, and nourish, and provide for thee—"Behold thy son." Then saith he to the disciple—"Behold thy mother. Receive her not as a pauper, "or a mere pensioner on thy bounty, but regard her, as "you would the tenderest of all connections—Behold "thy mother."

This is very instructive. It reminds us, first, of the indigence of our Lord and Saviour. Many talk of poverty, but he *was* poor. In ordinary cases he was sustained by alms; in extraordinary ones by miracles. When he came to die, he had no personal property, or landed estate to leave. All he had to bequeath was his wearing apparel, and even this never came to his mother: "they parted his raiment among them, and "for his vesture did they cast lots."

What becomes then of riches? Are we such fools as to fall down and worship this idol of general adoration? Does money produce—does it imply worth? "Silver and gold I have none," says Peter—So then a *man may be an* apostle and be moneyless. "Foxes "*have holes*, and the birds of the air have nests, but

" the son of man hath not where to lay his head"—why then a being may be " the brightness of the father's " glory, and the express image of his person," and be destitute!—But alas! all this will not keep numbers from thinking money the summit of all excellency. O money; money can add charms to ugliness: money can transform wrinkles into youth: money can fill brainless heads with wisdom, and render nonsense oracular: money can turn meanness into virtue, and falling like snow can cover a dunghill, and give it the appearance of whiteness and innocency!

Behold, secondly, an instance of the divine goodness, which ought to encourage the poor and needy. When one comfort is withdrawn another is furnished. When Jesus is removed, John is raised up. A christian should never despair. Our heavenly Father has more than one way of providing for his children. His resources are innumerable and inexhaustible. " O fear the Lord all " ye his saints, for there is no want to them that fear " him: the young lions do lack and suffer hunger, but " they that seek the Lord shall not want any good " thing." Let those who are dying without wealth, and have nothing to leave behind them, hear him saying, " leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them " alive, and let thy widows trust in me." Let those who fear that by bereavement they shall be reduced and impoverished, say with David, " when my father and " my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me " up. In him the fatherless findeth mercy."

Thirdly, we learn that we should endeavor to be useful not only living but dying. We see the Saviour attentive to the duty of every season, and every circumstance. Never so occupied even by his sufferings, as to forget others, he dies as he had lived; and not only when *going about* but even when nailed to the cross, we behold him *doing good.*

A christian, if he has not done it before, should now *set his house in order.* He should arrange his affairs, *and dispose of his* effects, and secure guardians for his

children—so as not to occasion perplexity and discord after his decease. He should be also attentive to the spiritual improvement of those around him. If able to speak he should recommend the Saviour and speak well of his ways. Dying words are impressive. This is the last time you can do any thing for your generation. "By faith, Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both "the sons of Joseph, and worshipped, leaning upon the "top of his staff. Now the days of David drew nigh "that he should die; and he charged Solomon his son, "saying, and keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to "walk in his ways, to keep his statutes and his com-"mandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, "as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest "prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou "turnest thyself." Mr. Bolton said to his children who stood around his dying bed, "see that none of you "meet me in an unconverted state at the day of judg-"ment." Dr. Rivet said in his last illness, "let all "who come to inquire after my welfare be allowed to "see me: I ought to be an example in death as well as "in life."

Fourthly. A lesson of filial piety is clearly deducible from this subject. Children are under an obligation to succor and relieve their parents according to their ability. And this is not to be considered as charity, so much as common justice. The apostle therefore calls it a requiting:—"Let them requite their pa-"rents." I admire the disposition of David, who when wandering from place to place, seemed regardless of himself, if he could provide a safe and comfortable situation for his father and mother: "he went to Miz-"peh of Moab: and he said unto the king of Moab, "let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth "and be with you, till I know what God will do for "me." I admire still more David's son and David's Lord, who, even in the agony of crucifixion commends his poor mother to the care of the beloved disciple.

And here you ask—but why did he this? Could he

not have provided for her himself?—He who turned water into wine, and made a few loaves sufficient to feed a whole multitude?—Could not he have furnished means for the subsistence of a destitute mother? Behold in answer to this another reflection. He does not needlessly work miracles. *The manna* which followed the Israelites in the wilderness *ceased* as soon as they could provide themselves *with the corn of the land.* He generally fulfils his kind designs by common means, and in the established course of things. His care extends to the poor as well as to the rich. Mark this. He has made the rich stewards, but not proprietors: he has given them an abundance, not to hoard up, but to expend and to administer. And the poor and distressed are as much consigned by providence to the care of the affluent, as Mary was charged upon John. None of God's benefits terminate wholly on the possessor—they are means as well as mercies, talents as well as endowments. If we are enlightened, we are to "arise and shine:" if converted, we are "to strengthen our brethren;" if comforted, we are "to comfort others with those com-"forts, wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God:" if we have all "things richly to enjoy, we are to be rea-"dy to communicate, willing to distribute."

Suppose a master should call into his presence a servant, and say to him, "take this money, and go carry "it to such a poor family." And suppose the servant as soon as he had gotten possession of it, should resolve to keep it or lay it out on some finery, or amusement. What would you think? Would you blame the master as wanting in generosity? No—but you would say *O thou wicked servant.* And what would the master himself say?—Surely he would punish him, and he would well deserve it, for he is at once guilty of unfaithfulness and cruelty. Such a master indeed may never find out this villainy. But the rich are going to appear before a God who *cannot be mocked*, to give an account of the application of the property which he committed to their *trust, for certain purposes* which his word clearly ex-

cifies. It was given them to teach the ignorant, to clothe the naked, to "make the widow's heart to sing "for joy"—Woe! woe be to them, if they shall be found to have frustrated the kindness of his designs, either by not using, or by wasting his goods!

Once more, John was *the disciple whom Jesus loved:* he had a peculiar friendship for him—and how does he express it? Not by diminishing his care, but by enlarging the claims of duty: not by increasing his estate, but by giving him a consumer—quartering upon him an old woman for life. You may deem this a strange proof of his affection, a strange way of honoring him! But if you view the matter aright, you will see that there is nothing unaccountable in it. To be employed *by him and for him* is a dignity and a privilege. If he pleased, he could well dispense with our poor services, but he engages us to improve our graces, and to reward our exertions. And in proportion as we are in a good frame of mind, we shall long to be instruments in the Saviour's hands, and bringing ourselves daily to his footstool, we shall ask, "Lord, what wilt thou have me "to do?"

John therefore, III. Executes the orders of his dying Lord; and "from that hour that disciple took her "unto his own home." He does not stand weighing things: "Can I afford to do it? Shall I not entail upon "myself expenses for life? and not only so, but trouble "also—yea and reproach and suspicion, by accommo- "dating the mother of one who was executed as a ma- "lefactor—an enemy to Cæsar?"—He obeys cheerfully, instantly, implicitly.

And let us remember that true obedience is prompt; and will lead us to "do all things without murmuring "and disputing." This is peculiarly the case with regard to charity. Real benevolence, if I may so express it, is not too long sighted and thoughtful: it will not suffer the fine impulse to cool, by indulging hesitations: when an obligation strikes us, it will not allow of our *eluding it, by giving us either inclination or time to*

bring forward the hardness of the times, the slackness of trade, the increase of family, the multiplicity of cases. While we stop to investigate every particular, to make comparisons, to collect evidences, and to take great pains not to be deceived—the opportunity is gone: our neighbor may not be alive a few days hence, or we may not —and thus by cautious and delayed beneficence, he will lose the relief, and we the honor of the action. Therefore, says Solomon, "withhold not good from them to "whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand "to do it. Say not unto thy neighbor go and come again, "and to-morrow I will give, when thou hast it by thee."

To return. Let us now follow the mother of our Lord to her new residence. Venerable woman, whom all generations have blessed, we rejoice in thy comfort! Thou hast *a certain dwelling place;* thou *shalt not want!* —With what kindness would John treat the charge of his departed Lord! With what tenderness would he nourish her! How many evenings would they pass together in discoursing of the Saviour, ascended to his father and their father, to his God and their God! How would they dwell upon his sermons, his miracles, his sufferings!—We meet once more with this distinguished woman in the sacred history. In the beginning of the acts of the apostles, we find the twelve returning from the place of his ascension, and in an upper room, and it is said, "they continued with one accord, "in prayer and supplication with the women, and Ma- "ry the mother of Jesus." After this she disappears, and we hear of her no more. But we shall by and by see her, and derive from her all the interesting particulars relative to the birth, the infancy, the youth of the child Jesus, over which for wise purposes a veil is now thrown.

Let me conclude by calling upon you to choose for yourselves the *situation* of these three women—they were *standing by the cross of Jesus. There*—by reading the scripture, by meditation, by the exercises of *faith, by the memorials* of his death, you may fix your-

selves. O! it is a blessed station: Take it, and "de-
"termine to know nothing, save Jesus Christ and him
"crucified."

Do you wish to contemplate whatever is grand and sublime? Take this station. Behold him on the cross —see *the sun of righteousness* as he sets gilding the heavens with glory; see him as he dies, exercising every grace, displaying every perfection!

Does the world prevail over thee? Take this station. Exclaim with the apostle, "God forbid that I "should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus "Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I "unto the world."

"His dying crimson like a robe,
"Spreads o'er his body on the tree;
"Then am I dead to all the globe,
"And all the globe is dead to me."

Do you feel trials and afflictions? Take this station. Behold a suffering Saviour; "consider him that en-
"dured such contradiction of sinners against himself,
"lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."

"Thousands have found the bless'd effect,
"Nor longer mourn their lot;
"While on his sorrows they reflect,
"Their own are all forgot."

Are you oppressed with a sense of guilt? Take this station. Bruised by sin, remember him who was bruised for it. Be of good cheer, "Surely he hath borne
"our grief and carried our sorrows, the chastisement of
"our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are
"healed."

Do you wish for an example? Take this station. Behold here not only a sacrifice, but a pattern. While he atones, he instructs. "He suffered for us, leaving
"us an example that we should follow his steps: who
"did *no sin*, neither was guile found in his mouth: who
"*when he was* reviled, reviled not again; when he suf-

an Alexander is a worm; yea, "all nations before him "are as nothing, less than nothing and vanity, Hea- "ven is his throne," and this *earth is* only *his footstool.* How can we enter his presence, or approach his infinite Majesty? Why, blessed be his name, he fills *the mercy seat;* he is on a *throne of grace;* and we are allowed, and even commanded to come to it *boldly.* But

I. It is necessary for us to know what this boldness is.

And we may be assured that it is not audacity, rudeness, or a trifling freedom. We have sometimes heard persons address God, in a manner which they would not dare to use, I will not say to a superior, but even to a fellow creature of their own level. Such persons would do well to compare scripture with scripture. For what is the language of the bible in other places? "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the "saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are "about him. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not "thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: "for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore "let thy words be few. Wherefore we receiving a "kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, "whereby we may serve God acceptably with reve- "rence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming "fire." They would also do well to remember the nature of the business in which they are engaged: for if we are imploring *mercy and grace*, common sense will tell us that the boldness we are allowed to indulge, can be only the boldness of a penitent and a suppliant. Now an encouragement to beg, is not surely a licence to offend. Prayer and insolence ill accord together.

This boldness then, arises from nothing in ourselves but purely from the goodness of the Being we address —and it consists principally, *in a persuasion that we are freely authorised to come, and may confidently hope to succeed.*

What a change is made in the view and feelings of a person by conviction of sin? Sin was once nothing in *his view, but* now awakened to consider, and enlighten-

ed to perceive its nature and consequences, he feels it to be the greatest evil; as before he could not be made to fear, he can scarcely now be induced to hope. Knowing his desert, and judging under the influence of human and guilty feelings, he finds it difficult to believe that God will receive him—But till he *does* believe this, he will not, he cannot come to him aright. God has therefore made provision to excite and sustain the confidence of self-condemned sinners.

He has revealed himself not as implacable, but as full of pity and compassion, "as the Lord God gracious and "merciful. He has commended his love towards us "in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." The conclusion is not more justly drawn, than it is infinitely encouraging: "He that spared not his own "son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not "with him also, freely give us all things? Surely he "hath borne our grief, and carried our sorrow, the "chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his "stripes we are healed." His blood "cleanseth us "from all sin. He is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. He suffered, the "just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God." I mention this the more fully, because we *come unto God by him:* and in proportion to our knowledge of the mediator, and our reliance upon him, will be our enlargement and consolation in duty. It is here that our hopes take their rise: it is here that we are "filled "with all joy and peace in believing. In whom," speaking of Christ, says the apostle, "we have boldness and "access with confidence by the faith of him." And again, "having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter "into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and "living way which he hath consecrated for us, through "the vail, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high "priest over the house of God; let us draw near with "a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our "hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our "*bodies washed* with pure water."

We have also *exceeding great and precious promises* —such as these. "God so loved the world, that he "gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth "in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous "man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, "and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, "for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are "not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, "saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than "the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, "and my thoughts than your thoughts."

To illustrate these promises, and to banish every fear, that springing from unworthiness and guilt would hinder our application to him, he has been pleased to add a succession of examples. Some of these are derived from characters the most vile: but vile as they once were, they "were washed, they were sanctified, "they were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, "and by the spirit of our God." Among men the chief offenders are always made examples of justice— but here they have frequently been made the examples of mercy. Civil governors are afraid to pardon the most criminal, lest they should operate as encouragements—but here they are designed to be precedents: "for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus "Christ might shew forth all long-suffering as a pattern "to them that should believe on him to life everlasting." By these instances he has said—"now despair if you "can.—See what I can do: and learn that neither the "number, nor the heinousness of your sins shall destroy "you, if you are willing to obtain salvation, by the "Lord Jesus Christ."

In time also the believer's own experience much aids his confidence. Though he has no more dependence upon himself than he once had, he learns to trust more simply and firmly in him who has never *turned away his prayer*, but has been *a very present help in every time of trouble.*

This boldness takes in not only a confidence of success, but also "a holy liberty in our addresses to him, "expressive of intimacy and privilege." Are we christians? We come not as strangers and foreigners, but as fellow citizens with the saints, and of *the household of God.* We have received not the spirit of bondage again to fear; but *the spirit of adoption whereby we cry Abba, Father!* Other monarchs can be approached only at certain seasons; and in certain cases; and with certain formalities. But you may call upon him at *all times;* and in all *circumstances.* You may "in every thing make known your requests unto God." You may go and inform him of all that perplexes, all that alarms, all that distresses you. He deems nothing too little to spread before him. You may tell him what you can tell no earthly friend. And you are not required to keep at a distance but allowed to come "even to his seat—to order your cause before him—to "fill your mouth with arguments—to put him in re-"membrance—to plead with him—to persevere and "not let him go except he bless you!"

II. Having considered the manner in which, let us observe the purposes for which we are to come to the throne of grace. They are these—to *obtain mercy*—and to *find grace.* These blessings are wisely connected together by the apostle, because there are too many people and—I dare say you have met with such—who try to separate them. They would be saved from hell, but not from sin. They wish to be pardoned, but not renewed. They would have mercy but not grace. But be not deceived. Whom God forgives he sanctifies and prepares for his service. And both these blessings are equally important and necessary to our salvation. Let us therefore pray for both.

First. Let us pray for *mercy.* And let us pray like those who know they greatly need it. You are verily guilty. You are charged with innumerable transgressions, and your consciences tell you that many of them are attended with circumstances of peculiar aggrava-

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tion. Till these are pardoned you are in a state of condemnation: and O! what a doom is that which is denounced upon you by the law which you have broken. Think of "the wrath of God:" think of the "worm "that dieth not, and the fire that is never to be quenched." It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the "living God!" And you are continually liable to the execution of this sentence: you must die soon, you may die this very night, this very hour: and then it will be too late to cry for mercy. Be prevailed upon therefore to seek it immediately and earnestly. "Have mercy "upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness: "according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies "blot out my transgressions."

But we shall need the exercise of mercy as long as we are in the body. We often contract fresh guilt. Our most holy things are defiled. "Who can say, I "have made my heart clean; I am pure from my sin!" Arch-Bishop Usher often said he hoped to die with the language of the publican in his mouth; and his biographer tells us his wish was fulfilled—he died, saying *God be merciful to me a sinner.* What an exalted character is given us of Onisiphorus? But says the apostle *the Lord grant unto him, that he may find*—not justice but—*mercy of the Lord in that day.* He would need mercy till then, and then he would need it more than ever. And when we all come to appear before his righteous tribunal to have our actions and our motives tried—"should he mark iniquity—who could stand?" Let us therefore say with Job, "though I were righte-"ous yet would I not answer him, but I would make "supplication to my Judge."

Secondly, let us pray for *grace to help in time of need.* But is not every time a time of need with us? It is. And there is not a moment in our existence in which we can live as we ought independent of divine grace. We need this grace to mortify our corruptions; to sanctify our affections; to resist temptations; to overcome the world. It is this and this alone can enable

pursue our journey; to run our race; to accom-
our warfare; to *endure to the end.* We cannot
or sing, or hear, or read as we ought without the
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l exhibited far less of the christian in their ad-
ment than in their poverty. Others have drop-
nd lost their religion entirely in passing from a
ge to a mansion. "The prosperity of fools shall
troy them." Let us therefore be *wise*, and re-
ber that the wisdom which alone can preserve us
sts in our fearing always; in a diffidence of our-
; in our praying *hold thou me up and I shall be*
He indeed can keep us from falling, even in slip-
places. Thus he guarded Joseph and Daniel, in
ions equally high and dangerous.
liction is a time of need. It matters not from
quarter the trouble springs, it is a *trying* season,
ne christian is concerned to *come forth as gold.*
t only wants support and comfort so that he may
int, but he wants strength and preservation so that
y not *sin.* He is concerned to be secured from
ience, from distrust of providence, from quarrel-
ith instruments. He wishes to glorify God in the
and to derive advantage from his crosses, so as

to be able to say it is *good for me that I have been afflicted.* For all this he seeks the Lord, and what the Lord said to Paul he may apply unto himself, " my grace is " sufficient for thee ; for my strength is made perfect in " weakness."

Death is a time of need. And it is an unavoidable one—other times of need may come, but this will come. It is indeed the last time of need, but it is also the greatest. It is new and untried. It settles every thing for ever. It is awful to let go our hold of earth, to give up the soul into the hand of God, and enter eternity. The enemy also now uses all his force to distress ; for there are two seasons in which he is peculiarly busy—when we are coming to Christ for grace—and when we are going to him for glory. Now others may endeavor to banish this subject from their minds, but the christian *must* think of it. And he *will* be concerned to die *safely*—as to consequences ; *honorably*—as to religion ; *comfortably*—as to himself ; and *usefully*—as to others. And what can be done here without grace to help—to help in this time of need! If many christians who are now cast down, were but assured that their sun would set without a cloud, they would be filled with strong consolation, bear cheerfully their trials, and look forward to every future scene with pleasure. Well grace *can* do this, and *has* done it for many, and even for many who were *once walking mournfully before the Lord.* When the time of need came, then came the grace—suffering grace for a suffering hour, and dying grace for a dying hour.

Now if this be our errand in prayer—if we are to pray—*that* we *may obtain* mercy, and *find* grace to help in time of need, does it not follow, as a fair inference from the subject—that a prayerless person is destitute both of the mercy and grace of God ? This is an awful truth, and it leads me, before I conclude, seriously to ask you—

First. *Have* you come to this throne ? Have you *ever prayed ?* Perhaps you have sometimes dragged

through the duty as a task—but did you ever feel it to be your privilege and your pleasure? Perhaps you have engaged in it occasionally—but has it been your habitual employment? Perhaps you have called upon God in the hour of sickness and danger—but as health returned, have you not dropped prayer by little and little, till you have lived entirely without him in the world? You have frequently attended public worship—do you pray much in your closet; or in the duties of your calling do you send up many a desire to God, saying, *Lord help me?* You are fond of hearing sermons—but while you so often hear from God, does God ever hear from you?

Secondly. Do you *design* to come? or, have you resolved to *restrain prayer before him?*

Do you imagine you can acquire these blessings in any other way than by prayer? This is impossible. "For all these things, says God, will I be inquired of. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; "knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

Or, do you imagine these blessings are not worthy of your pursuit? Alas, strange as it may appear, I suspect that this is the case. You are not prepared to estimate these advantages: you do not feel your need of mercy and grace. Otherwise surely you would deem them worth asking for. If you could gain a fortune by prayer—would you not pray? Or health—would you not pray? But what are these to mercy and grace? These comprise every other blessing—and nothing else can be a blessing without them.

Or, do you imagine they are not to be gained? There is no ground for such despair. He "waiteth to "be gracious, and is exalted to have mercy. Come, "for all things are now ready." None are excluded; all are welcome—yet if one class of petitioners could be more welcome, and successful than another—it would be—the young. "I love them that love me, and "they that seek me early shall find me."

DISCOURSE XV.

SUMMER AND HARVEST.

He that gathereth in summer is a wise son : but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame.—Prov. x. 5.

WHAT a scene of desolation was presented to the eye of Noah, when he opened the door of the ark. No human face appeared. The earth was stripped of all its beauty; and no trees, no plants, no grass were to be seen. The effects of the deluge were every where awfully visible; and every cloud, every wind, excited alarm. In this condition he offered a sacrifice. God accepted it—and to dissipate his fears, and to draw forth his confidence, he said, "while the earth remain-"eth, seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, and sum-"mer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease."

Each of these periods is not only useful, but instructive. We cheerfully part with the dreary hours of winter, to embrace the reviving spring, and as readily resign the growing hours of spring to welcome in the joyful harvest. When under divine providence this season arrives, "the year is crowned with his good-"ness;—the earth is full of his riches"—and the husband-man is called forth to secure the golden produce. He is reasonably expected to make every concern give place to this, and to exert all his diligence to improve the short but all important period. Hence the reflection of Solomon. "He that gathereth in summer is a "wise son; but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that "causeth shame." Common sense readily acquiesces *in all this—but let* us accommodate the subject to moral

law? Spiritual purposes. Let us represent your harvest-season and enforce upon you the necessity of diligence in using it.

I. God affords you opportunities for good; he favors you with seasons which may be considered as your harvest. In this view we may regard the whole period of life. While you are continued in this world, you have "space for repentance: and the long-suffering of "our Lord is salvation."

You are blessed with a season of gospel grace. While many are sitting in darkness and in the region of the shadow of death, upon you "hath the light shined, to "guide your feet into the way of peace." You not only live in a country where there is a written revelation, but your "eyes see your teachers, and your ears hear a "voice behind you saying, this is the way, walk ye in it, "when ye turn aside to the right hand or to the left." Though the preaching of the word is neglected by some, and despised by others, it is an invaluable privilege. By this the scripture is explained to the mind, and enforced on the conscience: by this you are warned of your danger and encouraged to flee for refuge: you are called upon to draw nigh, and assured that "all "things are now ready. Faith cometh by hearing; "and hearing by the word of God."

And this reminds us that you have a season of civil and religious liberty. You have the bible in your hands, and are not fined for reading it: you may assemble together in public, and hear the word of life without danger; your devotions are sanctioned by law, and you may "sit under your own vine, and under your "own fig tree, and none make you afraid." What advantages do we possess above many of our ancestors who suffered for conscience sake? They labored, and we have entered into their labors. "They took joy-"fully the spoiling of their goods. They had trial of "cruel mockings and scourgings, yea moreover, of "bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they "*were sawn asunder*, were tempted, were slain with the

" sword: they wandered about in sheep skins, and goat " skins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented: of whom " the world was not worthy: they wandered in deserts, " and in mountains, and in dens, and caves of the earth."

Some are living in a religious family where they have the benefit of instruction, prayer, and example. Some, like Timothy, have been trained up by a mother and a grandmother of unfeigned faith, and " from a child have known the scriptures which are " able to make us wise unto salvation."

Who in passing through a vale of tears has not experienced a day of trouble? From such a period many have had to date their saving acquaintance with divine things. Affliction is favorable to religion, it abstracts, it softens, it awes the mind; it strips the world of its attractions, and starves us out of the creature into God.

Where is the person who does not know what we mean by a season of conviction? Conscience has sometimes forced you to stand. Like Felix you have trembled under the power of the world to come. You have sometimes been pleasingly affected, you have wept, and prayed, and sighed, " now Lord what wait I for? my " hope is in thee."

But O! can I forget another season? or can I forget to urge the admonition of wisdom and friendship—" re- " member now thy creator in the days of thy youth, " while the evil days come not, nor the years draw " nigh when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them!" —Never, never, my young friends will you have a season in which your hindrances are so few, or your helps so many as the present. Every thing now invites, every thing constrains you: " behold now is the accept- " ed time; behold now is the day of salvation."

II. I would enforce upon you the necessity of diligence to improve your reaping season.

And first consider how much you have to accomplish. You have the work of a husband-man in harvest —*and will this* allow you to be drowsy and idle? Does *it not require* you to rise early, and be active all the

day? To seize every moment, and secure every assistance? The salvation of the soul is a great, an arduous concern—and many things are required of *you*. For though you are not left to yourselves, nor called to act in your own strength, yet religion is a race, and you must run; it is a warfare, and you must fight. The blessings of the gospel are free, but they are to be sought, and gained. It is God that "worketh in us to "will and to do of his own good pleasure," but we are commanded notwithstanding this, yea, because of this to "work out our salvation with fear and trembling." Spring then from the bed of sloth, shake off every impediment; you have sins to be pardoned, passions to be subdued, graces to be exercised, duties to be performed—a harvest to gather in!

Secondly, consider the worth of the blessings which demand your attention. The advantages held forth by the prospect of harvest, animate the husband-man to diligence and reconcile him to exertion; but what are the blessings of the field compared with the blessings of salvation? The one is perishable, the other is eternal —the one is for the body only, the other is for the soul. What is an earthly portion in a barn, to "an inheri-"ance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not "away, reserved in heaven for us?" I would address you as rational creatures. Is it not desirable to be redeemed from the curse of the law; to be justified freely from every charge brought against us at the bar of God; to be delivered from the tyranny and rage of vicious appetites and passions? Great is the happiness of those that belong to God here; but who can describe the exalted glory and joy that await them hereafter? Do you not wish to enter in with those who shall be for ever with the Lord; and of whom it is said, "they "shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; nei-"ther shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For "the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall "feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains "*of waters*: and God shall wipe away all tears from

" their eyes." Will not this indemnify you for every sacrifice, and abundantly recompence all your toil?

Thirdly, remember that your labor will not be in vain in the Lord. " Be not weary in well-doing, for " in due time you shall reap if you faint not." The husband-man has many uncertainties to contend with, insects, blights, droughts and storms—but probability stimulates *him*, how much more should actual certainty encourage *you?* " They that sow in tears shall reap " in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing " precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoic- " ing, bringing his sheaves with him."

Fourthly, remember that your season for action is limited and short. Harvest does not last long. Your time in the whole compass of it is but *a few days*, and how little of it deserves the name of life, or can be applied to any important purposes.—When infancy, sleep, business, recreations have engrossed their share—is the remainder think you too long a period to acquire the kingdom of God and his righteousness? But your time is uncertain as well as short. The present only is yours—you know not what a day or an hour will bring forth. The fool in the gospel talked *of goods laid up for many years*, when he had but a few moments left: God put his finger upon his conscience, and said, " thou " fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee. " Man knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are " taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught " in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil " time when it falleth suddenly upon them." Youth is no certain protection from the grave. Death does not go by age, nor does it always wait till it has sent a warning. Your time is always in motion: if you are idle, time is not—but hurrying you forwards. If you do not perceive your progress, every hour, and every moment brings you nearer to your end. And your time once gone, cannot be recalled. God has plainly told you *that there is* a season when he will not be found, " there- " *fore seek ye* the Lord while he may be found, call ye

" upon him while he is near." In vain those who despised the warnings of Noah, clung to the sides of the ark when the door was shut: it was then too late. " Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many I say " unto you will seek to enter in and shall not be able. " When once the master of the house is risen up, and " hath shut too the door, and ye begin to stand without, " and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open " unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I " know ye not, whence ye are: then shall ye begin to " say, we have eaten and drank in thy presence, and " thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I " tell you I know you not, whence ye are; depart from " me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weep- " ing and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abra- " ham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the " kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out."

Therefore finally, reflect upon the consequences of negligence. Is a man blamed for sleeping in harvest? Does every one reproach him as a fool? Does he deserve to suffer famine? You act a part far more absurd and fatal, who *neglect this great salvation*, and will not embrace in this " your day the things that belong " to your peace before they are hid from your eyes." Having made no provision for futurity, for eternity:— your ruin is unavoidable: It will also be insupportable. " It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the " day of judgment than for you." For a strict account will then be required of all your talents and opportunities: and what can you answer? O! the feelings of sinners in hell who have perished under the means of grace!—How will their consciences upbraid and condemn them! O! the anguish and despair of sinners, when dropping from time into eternity they exclaim, " the harvest is past, the summer is ended and we are " not saved!"

Let us conclude first by blessing God for the harvest with which he has again favored our country. We went forth with anxious hope: we saw " first the blade

DISCOURSE XVI.

THE FUNERAL OF A YOUTH.

Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, weep not. And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, young man, I say unto thee, arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother.—Luke vii. 12 to 15.

As we follow our Saviour in the evangelical history, we verify the words of the apostle when he says of him —*who went about doing good.* This character marks his diligence, and the cause in which it was employed. His life was one continued career of goodness: he did good to the soul and to the body: he did good by preaching and by miracles.

Every thing recorded of him is worthy of our attention; but the narrative before us is beautiful and impressive, in the highest degree. We behold grandeur blended with simplicity; and omnipotence with compassion. The circumstances progressively rise in importance; the mind is at last powerfully attracted to a single point, and all the passions remain in awful suspense till the joyful event relieves us by a flood of tears. The miracle requires a few remarks, and a few reflections.

The first thing we behold is a funeral procession. *This is a scene* which we have all witnessed; a scene

by no means unusual—but alas, owing to its frequency and familiarity, it fails to impress. It is however an occurrence unspeakably interesting in itself, and it ought to rouse our attention. How many lessons, were we disposed to learn, would a funeral supply?

Place yourselves under a tree, in a meadow, along which lies the path-way to the lonely church-yard. You say within yourself, "Here it comes in slow and "silent sadness. See! every one has some importance. "Who could bear to die unmourned? What a loss is "the death of some!—See those who walk nearest to "the corpse—ah! these are the bereaved. The rest "are friends and neighbors, and a heedless rabble "drawn by the spectacle.—Man goeth to his long home. "It is the end of all men, and the living should lay it to "heart. Soon the like ceremonies will be performed "for me. When carried along here myself, how in- "sensible shall I be to all those things which now agi- "tate and perplex me! Of what importance will it "then be, whether I have been poor or rich, honorable "or despised! But one thing is needful. O may I "choose that good part which shall not be taken away "from me.—Let me die the death of the righteous, "and let my last end be like his."

But let us draw near and contemplate *this* funeral solemnity. It was the funeral of a *young man*. We are not informed whether he died by disease or acci- dent, slowly or suddenly; but he was carried off in the prime of life. "One dieth in his full strength, being "wholly at ease and quiet. His breasts are full of milk, "and his bones are moistened with marrow. Another "dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth "with pleasure. They shall lie down alike in the dust, "and the worms shall cover them. What is our life? "it is even a vapor which appeareth for a little time, "and then vanisheth away." What is beauty, strength, youth? "Verily, every man at his best estate is al- "together vanity." Think of this, ye young. Re- *member the old* are not the only victims of death.

Enter church-yards: measure graves: read inscriptions—

> " ———What pathos in the date!
> " Few doctors preach so well!"

He was the *only son of his mother.* There is an ocean of love in the hearts of parents towards their children. Witness the reluctance and exclamation of Jacob—" me have ye bereaved of my children. Joseph " is not, Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin " away!—All these things are against me." Witness the mourning of David, even over a bad, a rebellious son. " And the king was much moved, and went up " to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he " went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my " son Absalom, would God I had died for thee, O Ab- " salom, my son, my son!" But this parental affection is stronger on the side of the female, than the male. Not only has the mother more natural sensibility and tenderness than the father, but the child, if I may so express it, is much more her's than his; it is her's by months of anxiety, and pangs of anguish; it is her's by a thousand nightly watchings, and daily cares; it is her's by numberless pleasures given and received, in which neither stranger nor friend intermeddles with her joy. Thus the performance of duty is secured and sweetened. But that which renders duty a privilege, in the very same proportion increases the fear of loss, and the anguish of separation. What then were the feelings of this mother—deprived of her *only* son? Had he been one of many, the loss would have been partial, and the affliction more easily endured—but he was the only pledge of virtuous affection, the only hope of future years; her life was entirely bound up in his. Mourning for an only son is mentioned in the scripture as the extreme of grief. " O daughter of my people, " *gird thee with* sackcloth, and wallow thyself in ashes, " *make thee* mourning as for an only son, most bitter

" lamentation: for the spoiler shall suddenly come up-
" on us."

But what closes the melancholy tale of this woman is—that she was *a widow!* A widow is always an affecting character, as she is liable to injustice and oppression, from those fiends who take advantage of weakness and distress; as she is deprived of the companion of her journey, and compelled to travel alone; as her anxieties are doubled, and there is none to share them with her. In this state a child may seem an addition to her difficulties—but if he excites care, he diverts grief: he is some company in her solitary hours; in him something of the husband remains; in his face the father's image is admired. He will render himself serviceable by dutiful attentions; he will place on her the regard which he owed the deceased, and love her with a double affection. He will also plead her cause, and become her protector and her refuge. But—such is no longer the condition of this poor widow. None is now left to support her tottering age; her last leaf is shaken down; her *last coal in Israel is quenched.* And she is now, it is probable, going to bury her only son in the same grave with his father. The opening of a husband's tomb would make her wounds bleed afresh. O! what would be her agony, when she would turn round, and leave the sepulchre—" there have I buried all my
" earthly happiness and hope—O for the day when I
" shall come hither too, and be gathered to my kindred
" dust."

Sorrowful as the occasion was, she attended the funeral herself. And I commend her. It was following her only son as far as she could go; it was deriving from the scene all the instruction it could afford, and all the impression it could produce. But in our age of improvement, and refinement, and feeling, friends and relations seldom accompany the funeral of their connections. A minister often buries a child, when he has no other audience to address than the few individuals who carry it to the grave; or the nurse who brings

it under her arm! Yea, we are told, and we only
to know some things by hear-say—that now in
teel life, as soon as the patient has expired, they v
draw from the very house, and leave the dead to
cenaries—so that the minister can only meet the
dertaker and his company, whose profit, alas! i
tirely of another kind! And where are these th
tending? And have people now, more sensibility
formerly? No—but they have more affectation
squeamishness, they have more love to the world
more aversion to every thing serious. But are
determined to banish and to keep from their m
every intimation of their mortality? With what
prise and horror will death come upon those who n
think of it? Are persons afraid of sorrow? "
" better to go to the house of mourning, than tc
" house of mirth. By the sadness of the counten
" the heart is made better." What advantages
this widow derive from her personal attendance in
trying circumstances?

But she was not alone—" much people of the
" was with her." This shewed the esteem in w
the family was held. But though numbers of
friends and neighbors of the widow attended he
this mournful occasion, sympathizing with her u
the heavy affliction, and wishing to comfort her,
relief could *they* afford. They willingly commis
her case, but cannot restore her son. Submission
patience were the only lessons they could preach
she could learn. But here comes advancing tow
them another company, the leader of which can *sa*
the uttermost. The two parties join in the suburl
the city—and what does our Lord and Saviour?

First, he *knew all the particulars of the case.* T
who were with him could only see as they were pas
by, a funeral—but he knew the corpse stretched
the bier, he knew that it was a young man; that it
the only son of his mother, and that she was a wid
Secondly. He did *not wait to be implored.* So

his miracles were wrought in answer to the supplications of the individuals themselves; for he never refused any who applied to him—and this should teach us to pray for ourselves. Some of his miracles also were performed in consequence of the intercession of others: thus we find neighbors and relations were more than once honored by obtaining a cure for their connections—and this should encourage us to pray for others. But of several he could say, "I am found of "them that sought me not." Sometimes before we call, he answers: such a very present help is he in trouble. In the case before us, the relief was entirely spontaneous, and self-moved.

Thirdly, when he saw her, he had *compassion on her.* By nothing was our Saviour more distinguished than by pity and tenderness—He was "*touched with the "feelings of our infirmities:*" his eye affected his heart; he made all the miseries he beheld his own. Under the influence of this compassion,

—Fourthly, he *said unto her, weep not.* How unavailing not to say impertinent, would this have been from any other lips? Were you officiously to advance, and breaking the silence of the funeral train, say to the chief mourner, "woman be easy, be happy, weep no "more," would it not be deemed equally singular and vain? And it is more than probable that in the case before us, the language of our Saviour would excite surprise, especially in the widow herself. Holding back her veil—she would look to see what stranger passing by thus interested himself in her grief, and gave her advice so easy to offer, and so impossible to take. When lo!

Fifthly, Jesus without any ostentatious ceremony, "went and touched the bier—and they that bear it "stood still;" all amazement and expectation. Every eye is fixed upon him: what a moment of suspense and eagerness! At length in a tone of uncontrolable authority, "he said to the young man, I say unto thee, arise!" He does this in his own name; he claims a power *which controls* even the dead. And the event justifies *the pretension.* He never spake in vain. In a mo

ment, in the twinkling of an eye the blood begins to liquify and flow through the veins and arteries; the lungs heave again; the eyes open—he "that was dead sat "up and began to speak"—my soul, what did he say?

Finally, observe the application, the delicacy—what shall I call it—of the miracle: and "he delivered him "to his mother!" He did not say, go preach the gospel; or come, follow me. It was a prodigy of *loving kindness; of tender mercy:* he would comfort her, and therefore he prefers her satisfaction to the honor he would have gained by the attendance of such a disciple on himself. What a present was here? "He deliv-"ered him to his mother!"

How striking the whole scene! to see a man instantly called back—from the invisible world! what awe would it produce; what wonder would it excite! Some would be ready to flee from him—but the mother,—she would embrace him after this second birth, and "remember no more again her anguish, for joy that a "man is born again into the world." But would the son engross all her attention? would she not think of Jesus? this friend in trouble; this restorer of her happiness? O! I see her kneel and adore.—Let us conclude by three general reflections.

I. What a vale of tears is this world; how various and numerous are the evils to which human life is exposed! "Man that is born of a woman, is of few days "and full of trouble! Surely every man walketh in a "vain shew, surely they are disquieted in vain! he "heapeth up riches and cannot tell who shall gather "them." His pains are great, his disappointments frequent, his care corroding. His possessions generate alarms: and in proportion to his affections are his afflictions: his roses grow on thorns, and his honey wears a sting. Here we see a fellow creature pining with sickness. There we hear a voice saying, "I sit, and "am alone as a sparrow upon the house top. Lover "and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine ac-"*quaintance into* darkness." It is impossible to walk *the street or pass along* the road, without being assailed

by sights and sounds of distress. And how peculiarly lamentable are some of these?—But

II. Let the afflicted remember that they are not left without resource: let them learn where to flee in the day of trouble. It is to the friend of sinners. Why, is this Saviour any longer on earth that we may apply to him? Unquestionably—how else could he fulfil his promise, "where two or three are gathered together in "my name, there am I in the midst of them?" His bodily presence was not necessary to his assistance *in the days of his flesh:* he could speak a cure at a distance. He is now essentially, and spiritually near—near enough to hear all your complaints, and to afford you succor. He knows and observes all your distresses, and he has the same tenderness, and the same power as of old. Is your condition very trying and alarming? You have no cause for despair. *At even-tide it* may *be light.* Little did this poor woman expect to meet with such a glorious change in her circumstances at the funeral of her last comfort. "When the Lord turned "again her captivity, she was like them that dream!" But he was pleased to bring her thus low before he helped her, to teach us never to think our case desperate, or that his interference can come too late. But he does not deliver me?—The time and the manner of relief are his own; there are cases in which he can do us more good by the continuance, than by the speedy removal of our sorrows—but of this we may be assured, that he will not suffer us to call upon him in vain.

Let us apply this to a particular case. You say—"I share in this woman's affliction, but not in her joy. "My child is dead—but no Jesus says to me, *weep not.*" Yes, Rachael there is—"Thus saith the Lord, refrain thy "voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears; for "thy work shall be rewarded; and they shall come "again from the land of the enemy. And there is "hope in thine end saith the Lord that thy children "*shall come again* to their own border." But he will *not raise my child* to this fond embrace? Yes he will. *He who said to the young man, arise,* is "the resurrec-

" tion and the life." Thy child shall rise again, and be delivered unto thee all over glorious, and no fear of separation shall damp the joy of union.

III. What think you of Christ? Does not his character combine every excellency and attraction? And is the relation of all this given us merely to gratify our curiosity? Are we to peruse the life of our Lord and Saviour as we would read the history of a Cyrus or Alexander? No—it is not written for our amusement, but for our profit. And then we peruse it properly—when we admire him—love him above all—depend wholly upon him, and feel the transforming efficacy of every view we take of his character, " changing us into " the same image, from glory to glory, as by the spirit " of the Lord."

Let us therefore " be followers of him as dear chil- " dren." Let us cultivate benevolence, and do all the good we can, especially to the fatherless and widows. These he has peculiarly recommended to our attention, not only by his example but by his word. " Ye shall " not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. If thou af- " flict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me; I " will surely hear their cry; and my wrath shall wax " hot, and I will kill you with the sword: and your " wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless." I know you cannot work miracles—but you can shew mercy. Go—*visit the widow in her affliction.* I know you cannot raise her dead son—but you can preserve her living one. Go—and administer healing medicines and wholesome food; go and clothe his naked body, and inform his ignorant mind; go and endeavor to snatch him from ruin, and render him the staff of his poor widowed-mother's age. Go—go, and enjoy all the luxury of doing good. " When the ear heard me, " then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it " gave witness to me; because I delivered the poor " that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none " *to help him.* The blessing of him that was ready to " *perish* came upon me: and I caused the widow's " *heart to sing* for joy."

DISCOURSE XVII.

FEARS REMOVED.

And Manoah said unto his wife, we shall surely die, because we have seen God. But his wife said unto him, if the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt-offering, and a meat-offering at our hands, neither would he have shewed us all these things, nor would, as at this time, have told us such things as these.—Judges xiii. 22, 23.

SAMSON is the last of the Israelitish deliverers recorded in this book. He differs very much from all his predecessors; for we never find him presiding over the council, or commanding in the army—but a tremendous scourge to the enemies of his country in his own person.

His history is full of wonders. An angel ushers him into the world. This angel first appeared to his mother, and foretold his birth. He soon after discovered himself also to his father, in company with his mother. His father immediately provided an entertainment for him—but the angel commanded him to offer it in sacrifice to the Lord. He did so—the angel ascended in the flame, and they saw him no more. By this they knew that he was a divine messenger, and in consequence of this apprehension "Manoah said unto his wife, we shall "surely die, because we have seen God. But his wife "said unto him, if the Lord were pleased to kill us, he "would not have received a burnt-offering, and a meat-"offering at our hands, neither would he have shewed "us all these things, nor would, as at this time, have "*told us such things as these.*"

And what does this passage teach us? I. What peculiar impressions, divine manifestations make upon the mind. II. The difference there is in the knowledge and experience of the Lord's people. III. The profit that is to be derived from a pious companion. IV. How much there is in the Lord's dealings with his people to encourage them at all times, if they have skill enough to discern it.

I. See the peculiar impressions which divine manifestations make upon the mind. To a certain degree these impressions are proper: such manifestations ought to strike our minds, to humble us, to produce reverence and godly fear. If an earthly king were to call upon us we should be filled with awe as soon as he discovered himself—how much more should this be the case, when *he* approaches us, who is *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.* Hence, Jacob exclaimed, "how dread-"ful is this place; this is none other but the house of "God, and this is the gate of heaven." Job said, "I "have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but "now mine eye seeth thee: wherefore I abhor myself, "and repent in dust and ashes." Isaiah also, in like manner cries out, "Woe is me! for I am undone: be-"cause I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among "a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the "King, the Lord of Hosts." Thus, awfully were these good men impressed as soon as they apprehended the presence and glory of God.

But impressions, good in themselves, may become excessive; and the cause producing them may be misunderstood, and improperly dreaded. Thus Manoah reasons, "we shall surely die, for we have seen God!" This was a common apprehension of old, and it is easy to account for it. Ever since man became a sinner, an enemy to God, every approach of the Deity has awakened in him terror and confusion. Our consciences naturally tell us that we deserve nothing but heavy tidings from the invisible world: we therefore dread every messenger from thence. And, even when God

comes to us in mercy, the same sentiment occurs and sometimes leads us, like Manoah, to mistake his design, and draw a fearful conclusion from it.

Thus, when he comes to convince us of sin and to humble the pride of our hearts—we imagine that we shall now die.—But we are mistaken: he is only come to prepare us for the proofs of his love. He impresses us with a sense of our danger, that we may flee for refuge; with a sense of our pollution, that we may wash and be clean. "They that be whole need not a physi-"cian, but they that are sick."

Thus, when he comes in providence, and destroys our schemes, and visits us with breach upon breach—again, O! we are going to be undone! But we shall presently see that he came as a friend, though disguised, and only used means to wean us from the world, and bring us more entirely to himself, *as our exceeding joy.*

Let us, II. Remark the difference there is in the knowledge and experience of the Lord's people. What surprises and terrifies one, is both plain and pleasing to another. What opposite conclusions do Manoah and his wife draw from the same event? He infers wrath; she mercy. The former looks for destruction; the latter for salvation. Thus, there are degrees in grace, there is *hope*, and *the free assurance of hope;* some have *little* faith, others are *strong in faith, rich in faith.* In the church there are *babes*, and there are those *of full age, who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*

And this difference is not always to be judged of by the order of nature, or external advantages. "There "are first that shall be last, and there are last that shall "be first." We find here the weaker vessel the stronger believer. Nor is this a solitary instance. They were women, yea widows, who ministered to our Lord of their substance. The three Marys approached the foot of the cross when the disciples forsook him and fled; and these also appeared first at the sepulchre. *Nothing is* said of Timothy's father, but the apostle

celebrates the *unfeigned faith of his mother and his grand-mother*. He also speaks honorably to the Philippians of *these women that had labored with him in the gospel.*

Neither does this difference in their attainments affect the reality of their religion, or the safety of their state. The infant is no less a child than the young man. Our Saviour does not despise "the day of small "things. A bruised reed shall he not break, and a "smoaking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth "judgment unto victory."

Nevertheless, it is very desirable to be matured and established christians—not only to be alive in religion but lively, not only to be fruitful, but to bring forth much fruit, and to be "filled with all joy and peace in "believing, that we may not only have hope, but abound "in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." And this is important, not only as the glory of God, and the comfort of your own minds depend much upon it—but also as it prepares for usefulness, and enables you the better to *serve your generation*, and the more easily to *speak a word in season to him that is weary.*

This leads us to notice, III. The profit that is to be derived from a pious companion. "Two are better "than one; because they have a good reward of their "labor. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow; "but woe to him that is alone when he falleth: for he "hath not another to lift him up." Man is formed for society, and religion indulges and sanctifies the social principle. And if a man be concerned for his spiritual welfare, he will be glad to meet with those who are travelling the same road, and are partakers of the same hopes and fears: he will be thankful to have one near him who will watch over him, and admonish him, who by seasonable council will fix him when wavering, embolden him when timid, and comfort him when cast down. And it is to be observed that in spiritual distress we are often suspicious of our own reasonings and conclusions; we know the deceitfulness of our

own hearts and are afraid lest while they encourage, they should ensnare. We can depend with more confidence upon the declarations of our fellow christians—and only let them relate their own experience, recal to our minds some forgotten truth, apply some promise, or give a new turn to a particular circumstance—and we are relieved, and delivered.

And, O happy is the man who has such a friend and helper *in the desire of his eyes.* In various instances, the importance of the female character to the welfare of man appears. She will aid Manoah in bringing up their children, and the earlier parts of education devolve almost exclusively upon her. She will assist him in the management of his estate: "the heart of her "husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have "no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil "all the days of his life. She looketh well to the ways "of her household, and eateth not the bread of idle-"ness—No man ever prospered in the world, without "the consent and co-operation of his wife." She will also help him in the preservation of his character, of his health, of his peace of mind. Her soothing voice can charm away *the evil spirit:* her soft hand can smooth the wrinkles of an anxious brow, and wipe off the mildew of an unwholesome evening. But she is found in the noblest sense, *a help-meet for him*—in aiding his piety, in adding flame to his devotion, and by furnishing motive to his zeal. By prayer, by example, by conversation, she can encourage his resolutions, disperse his doubts, and *help his unbelief.* Such was the happiness of Manoah—he had one who was an "heir with him "of the grace of life. But his wife said unto him, if "the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have "received a burnt-offering, and a meat-offering at our "hands, neither would he have shewed us all these "things, nor would, as at this time, have told us such "things as these."

Whence, IV. We take occasion to observe, that *there is always* enough in the Lord's dealings with his

people to encourage them if they have wisdom enough to discern it. How well did this woman reason! How naturally, yet how forcibly. "Nay—let us not turn "that against us, which is really for us. We shall not "die unless God be pleased to kill us—and surely the "tokens of his favor are not the pledges of his wrath."

Her conclusion is drawn from two things. First, the acceptance of their sacrifice. "If the Lord were "pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt-"offering and a meat-offering at our hands." It is not his manner to accept the offering and reject the person. "And the Lord had respect unto Abel and his "offering, but unto Cain and his offering, he had not "respect." Secondly, the secrets with which he had favored them.—"Neither would he have shewn us all "these things, nor would, as at this time, have told us "such things as these." This regards the birth of their son, his education, his deliverance of their country—If the accomplishment of this be certain, our destruction is impossible.

Let us drop Manoah and his wife, and think of ourselves. It is a dreadful thing for God to kill us. What is the loss of property, of health, or even of life, to the loss of the soul. Men can *kill the body*, but there "is "no more that they can do, but God is able to destroy "both body and soul in hell. It is a fearful thing to "fall into the hands of the living God."

Hence it becomes unspeakably important to know how he means to deal with us. And blessed be his name, there are satisfactory evidences of his disposition —that he is not our enemy but our friend, and concerned for our welfare. Some of these are more general; others are more peculiar.

He has not left himself without witness "in that he "has done us good, and given us rain from heaven, and "fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with joy and glad-"*ness.*"

He has borne with our provocations, and though he *could easily* and righteously have destroyed us, we are

still in the land of the living, and we ought to "account "that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation. The "goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance."

Had he desired the death of the sinner, would he have provided and accepted the grand sacrifice, which Jesus made upon the cross for us?—But we know he provided it; we know he accepted it, and that it was "an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smell-"ing savor."

If he were pleased to kill us would he have given us such exceeding great and precious promises; promises so rich, so general, so free? Would he have said "seek "ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him "while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, "and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him "return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon "him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out."

Resolved on your destruction, would he have favored you with such affecting discoveries. Like the man in the gospel, though unable to tell every circumstance attending the operation, cannot you now say, "one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I "see?" Has he not "called you out of darkness into "his marvellous light?" Are you not filled with wonder —does not every thing appear new? Have you not seen an evil in sin which has rendered it odious and burdensome—a depravity in yourselves which has led you ever since to exclaim, behold I am vile—and such a glory in the Saviour as makes you willing to follow him whithersoever he goeth? "Flesh and blood hath "not revealed this unto thee, but our Father who is in "heaven."

Had his aim been your ruin, would he have produced in you such sentiments and dispositions?—So that—the heart of stone is removed—you *mourn* for sin, and for the sins of others as well as your own.—You "hunger "*and thirst after* righteousness," and as much long to *be sanctified* as to be pardoned; and pray as much t

obtain purity as peace. You love the sceptre, as well as glory in the cross: and your dependence upon the Saviour's death is accompanied by endeavors to imitate his example, and you can never be perfectly reconciled to yourselves till *the same mind* be in you *which was also in Christ Jesus.* If he smiles, you are well enough satisfied to bear the frowns of the world, and can say as you advance in duty and reproach—"if this be to be "vile, I will yet be more vile."

And under your greatest discouragements, under every temptation to go back, have you not been enabled to persevere in the use of means? Though you have been strangers to comfort and freedom in duty, you have not restrained prayer before him, but through many a benighted season you have waited for him "more "than they that watch for the morning." On the very verge of despair, something has afresh excited hope; "then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet—will I "look again toward thy holy temple." You have had a degree of confidence—not only that you *shall* not seek him in vain, but that you *have* not: "I said in my "haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes: neverthe- "less thou heardest the voice of my supplication, when "I cried unto thee." And thus while powerfully drawing you he has been secretly sustaining you, as in the case of David, who said—"my soul followeth hard "after thee. Thy right hand upholdeth me."

Now all this is really his work: by the grace of God you are what you are. It is *he that has made you thus to differ* from others and from yourselves. And if *the Lord had a mind to kill you*, why should he have done all this? The conclusion is as obvious as it is encouraging. He could have destroyed you without all this. Surely he does not excite expectations to disappoint us: or desires to torment us. Surely he does not produce a new taste, a new appetite, without meaning to indulge, to relieve it. Besides—as he does nothing in vain, so he *does nothing* imperfect. What he begins, he is able to *finish; and* when he begins, he designs to finish. With

regard to other agents we cannot certainly infer the completion from the beginning—their views alter; they meet with unexpected difficulties; their purposes are frequently broken off—but it is otherwise here. The foundation of God standeth sure, and the "top stone "shall be brought forth with shoutings; grace, grace "unto it." It shall never be said of the God of our salvation—*he began to build, but was not able to finish.* "We are confident," says the apostle, "of this very "thing, that he who hath begun a good work in you will "perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

May you likewise be humbly confident of the same truth. May you be enabled to say with David "the "Lord will perfect that which concerneth me; thy mer-"cy, O Lord, endureth for ever: forsake not the work "of thine own hands." And "when you are convert-"ed" from your doubts and fears, and dejections, "strengthen your brethren. Comfort the feeble mind-"ed; support the weak; be patient towards all men. "Lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble "knees; and make strait paths for your feet, lest that "which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it ra-"ther be healed."

DISCOURSE XVIII.

THE PROFANE EXCHANGE.

Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birth-right. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.—Heb. xii. 16, 17.

THE history of the wicked as well as of the righteous is useful. By their crimes we are cautioned, and by their miseries we are warned. And as the Israelites fled from the tents of Korah, when *the ground clave asunder and swallowed them up*, saying, *lest the earth swallow us up also*—so should we abandon the course of the ungodly world, lest we share in their tremendous ruin.

Anxious for our welfare, the scripture addresses our fear as well as our hope, and holds forth instances of divine vengeance, as well as proofs of divine mercy. Hence the command of our Lord: "remember Lot's "wife." And hence the admonition of the apostle, "lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as "Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birth-right. "For ye know how that afterward, when he would have "inherited the blessing, he was rejected; for he found "no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully "with tears."

And what is all this to us? Much every way. I compare your privileges with his privileges—your sin *with his sin*—and your doom with his doom.

I. Let us view Esau in his original state—and compare your privileges with his privileges. To stand supreme in the house of the patriarch Isaac, was no trifling prerogative. His house was *the house of God*, and *the gate of heaven*. In this family, Jehovah revealed himself; and there he was adored and served, while idolatry prevailed over all the other nations of the globe. And such was once the condition of this unhappy character; accordingly he possessed the birth-right, and stood in a fair way to obtain all the advantages flowing from it. And these were great and numerous.

To the birth-right belonged pre-eminence over the other branches of the family. To the birth-right appertained a double portion of the paternal inheritance. To the birth-right was attached the land of Canaan, with all its sacred distinctions. To the birth-right was given the promise of being the ancestor of the messiah, the "first-born among many brethren," the Saviour "in whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed." And to the birth-right was added the honor of receiving first from the mouth of the father a peculiar benediction, which, proceeding from the spirit of prophecy was never pronounced in vain—Such were the prospects of Esau.

And what are yours? It is true you were not born in the house of Isaac, but you have been brought forth in a christian country, in a "land the Lord careth for," where "the darkness is past and the true light now "shineth." You have the bible; you have sabbaths; you have sanctuaries; you have ordinances; you have ministers; you have the throne of grace, you have the promise of the Holy Ghost; and *all things* appertaining to your everlasting happiness *are now ready*. You possess much, but all your present advantages are not to be compared with those glorious hopes to which you are called by the gospel. You have the prospect of becoming a "kind of first fruits of his creatures," of joining "the "general assembly and church of the first born, whose "*names are written* in heaven"—a primogeniture whose

privileges far surpass those of the son of Isaac: a birth-right which comprehends a *better country* than Canaan, even heaven, where we shall reign "kings and priests "unto God," where "the Lord commandeth the bless-"ing, even life forevermore." But this pearl is not for the swine, who ignorant of its value tramples it under foot; but for those who conscious of its incomparable worth, prefer it to every thing else, and like the wise merchant are willing to sell all to buy it. These high advantages may be sacrificed.—

II. Let us therefore view Esau in the surrender of his privileges, and compare your sin with his sin.—"For one morsel of meat he sold his birth-right." It is obvious that the loss was *voluntary and base*. First, it was voluntary. No one forced it from him—he *sold* it. He was indeed tempted to part with it by the sensation of hunger, and the sight of pottage when he was faint: an object was before him which promised the immediate gratification of his sensual appetite. But he could very soon have obtained food upon far easier terms. And surely the birth-right could not have a rival in a mess of pottage? Where was reason? Does the man yield to the brute?—No: he was not compelled to sacrifice his claims. And who compels you to abandon your hopes of heaven? who forces you into perdition?—You say that you live in a world full of enticing objects; that the dominion of sense is strong; that it is not very easy to resist the impulse of the moment. But is it impossible to resist? Have not many overcome, though placed in the same circumstances, and possessed of the same nature with you? What is goodness untried? Have you not reason as well as appetites? and is not grace attainable by you, and sufficient for you? And remember that you can never have so strong a motive to commit sin as to avoid it. The greatest difficulties therefore which you have to overcome, are those which are placed to keep you from hell. *What is* the applause of a fellow creature to the frown *of the Almighty*? What is a momentary pleasure to

endless pain? and you know you act freely: you know that all the men in the world cannot force you to will: you know that the tempter can do nothing more than propose—the determination rests with you. You cannot justify yourselves even now to your own consciences, and hereafter unable to allege one excuse, you will be speechless. Yes: here is the true cause of your ruin—"ye will not come unto me that ye might have "life. You have loved idols and after them you will go."

Secondly, it was equally base. For what is the price of the birth-right? an empire? a crown?—a crown sparkles in the eye of ambition; a throne is the highest pinnacle of human pride.—Nothing like it—but a despicable trifle—*one morsel of meat—a mess of pottage*—the dearest dish says Bishop Hull, that was ever purchased, except the forbidden fruit. But I feel ready to dispute this. Are not you more than like him? Do you not surpass him in folly? For what do you sell the treasures of the soul and eternity—but *a thing of nought?* a fleeting indulgence, a false point of honor, an imaginary interest? Here is your eternal infamy and disgrace! "You have sold yourselves," says the prophet "for "nought." For what proportion is there between the things which you thus exchange? Duly consider the "unsearchable riches of Christ;" think what it is to be "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places;" what it is to live in pleasure, to die in hope, to obtain "glory, honor, and immortality." These are the blessings you give up—And what do you gain by the surrender? Solomon tells you—"vanity and vexation of "spirit." Worldly things are less than the soul and cannot fill it, worse than the soul and cannot satisfy it. They have no relation to our grand wants, or our best interests. They please only to poison, they elevate only to depress. They *perish in the using*. You can carry nothing of them with you. You are not certain of holding them for life, and if you were: "what is your "life, it is even as a vapor that appeareth for a little "time and then vanisheth away." View them in the

light of scripture; view them under the anguish of conscience; view them from the borders of the grave; view them from the vastness of eternity, and they are nothing. Nevertheless for these—and often without obtaining them—you sin away your everlasting portion. "What is a man profited if he should gain the whole "world and lose his own soul?" If the whole cannot indemnify him—can a part? a particle? "O ye sons "of men how long will ye love vanity and seek after lea- "sing?—Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge?"

III. Let us consider Esau in his misery, and compare your doom with his doom. "For you know how "that afterward when he would have inherited the bless- "ing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repent- "ance, though he sought it carefully with tears." Read the relation in the book of Genesis. Nothing could be more affecting than his expostulations, and his bitter cries—but to no purpose does he urge his petition or press his father to retract: the benediction is pronounced, and Isaac acquiesces in the decision of heaven. For repentance here refers to Isaac not to Esau: the meaning is not that Esau humbled himself in vain for his sin, and could not obtain forgiveness—but that he could not prevail upon Isaac to change his mind, and reverse what he had spoken: that with regard therefore to the birth-right which he had sold, his loss was irretrievable.

And did God thus by his righteous judgment exclude from all his claims the profane Esau because he had despised them: "how shall we escape if we neg- "lect so great salvation? Of how much sorer pnnish- "ment suppose ye shall he be thought worthy, who "hath trodden under foot the son of God, and hath "counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was "sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite un- "to the spirit of grace?" Are you disposed to pity *him?* Yea, rather weep for yourselves. Your loss is *inestimably* greater than his loss. After all his disappointments he had something left, and could entertain

himself with the diversions of the field: but your condition will be destitute of all resources. And with no business to engage, no amusements to beguile

> " ———Say ye gay dreamers of gay dreams,
> " How will ye weather an eternal night
> " Where such expedients fail?"

Then your application will be useless. You may supplicate but you will be rejected, and no place will be found for repentance in the mind of your judge, though you seek it carefully with tears.

Hence we see what a difference there is between the origin and the issue of an irreligious course. " A pru-
" dent man foreseeth the evil and hideth himself, but
" the simple pass on and are punished." The wise will always judge of things by their end: it is the end that crowns the action, and we very justly say all is well that ends well. Sin is never profitable, but its beginnings are flattering; " stolen waters are sweet, and bread eat-
" en in secret is pleasant—but he knoweth not that the
" dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths
" of hell. Though wickedness be sweet in his mouth,
" though he hide it under his tongue: though he spare
" it, and forsake it not; but keep it still within his
" mouth: yet his meat in his bowels is turned, it is the
" gall of asps within him. What fruit had ye then in
" these things, whereof ye are now ashamed? for the
" end of these things is death."

Again. Sin unavoidably brings a man sooner or later to lamentation and regret. " Thine own wickedness
" shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprov
" thee: know therefore and see, that it is an evil thing,
" and bitter that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God,
" and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of
" hosts." And hence if we studied our true comfort, we should never sin: we should reason thus. " If ever
" I am saved, I must be brought to repentance, and eve-
" ry sin I now commit will then give me pain: and if I
" *have not that* godly sorrow which worketh repentance

" unto life, O! the self condemnation and anguish of a " dying bed, and a judgment day. Sin, like Ezekiel's " roll, is written within and without with lamentation " and mourning and woe."

Let us also remark that there is a repentance which is unavailing. Paul tells us of a "sorrow of the world " which worketh death!" Some are fretting because every one will not submit to their humors; some grieve over their temporal losses and never ask " where is " God my maker that giveth songs in the night?" Every remorse of conscience is not the effect of saving grace. Judas " repented and went and hanged him- " self." The eyes which sin shuts, eternity will open— but then grief comes too late: blessings once lost cannot be recovered.

I know that many unguarded things have been said of the loss of a day of grace. The subject is alarming. I do not pretend to do justice to it, or to answer any curious questions which may arise from it. What I think I am authorised to say from the scripture is this. First. That while there is life there is hope; nor can we imagine that God would prolong existence but to afford us space for repentance. This indeed he has assigned as the reason. God " is long-suffering to us-ward not wil- " ling that any should perish, but that all should come " to repentance. The long-suffering of our Lord is sal- " vation." Secondly, it is always dangerous to delay the work of repentance; since by repeated acts, habits are formed, and dispositions rendered more and more unfavorable. The disease neglected becomes inveterate; and the shrub suffered to stand grows into a deep-rooted tree. " Can the Ethiopean change his skin, or " the leopard his spots? then may ye also learn to do " good who are accustomed to do evil!" But we should not only consider repentance as a work to be performed by us and the delay of which multiplies difficulties: but also—and without this our repentance cannot be saving —*as a blessing* and an influence to be imparted from *God. Now your* criminal delay in seeking this renders it

less probable that you will ever find it: for though you cannot deserve grace, you may provoke it: and after so many invitations scorned—what wonder if he should say "none of them that were bidden shall taste of my "supper." Thirdly. There are cases and circumstances in every man's life more friendly to religion than others; on these much seems to turn; and these may be lost even in this life. I have no doubt but that when Felix trembled he felt as he never did before, and never did again. But he wilfully strove to do away the impression. And have not some of you had convictions which have for the time filled you with fear? Have you not had such relishes of good things as have led you to *call the sabbath a delight* and to hear *the word with joy?* Has not your closet occasionally seen a bended knee; and your walks witnessed your tears and vows. Your earthly hopes withered, and your comforts removed, have you not been constrained to turn aside from the world, deploring its emptiness and sighing for a nobler good? now when he *draws* we should *run:* when he *knocks* we should *open.* Fourthly. Death it is certain ends all your opportunities: after this no pardon will be offered, no motives will be urged. Time is for sowing, and eternity for reaping, and "what a man "soweth that shall he also reap." Hence the distinction always maintained in the scripture between this world and another: the one is a state of probation, the other of decision. Hence the infinite importance of life. Hence the wisdom of complying with the admonition "seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon "him while he is near." For there is a season when if you "call upon him he will not answer, and if you seek "him early you will not find him." And how soon you may be in this unalterable state it is impossible to determine. We know your breath is in your nostrils; you are exposed to a thousand accidents and diseases.

But your harvest is not yet past, your summer is not yet ended. Still he bears with you: Once more he invites you. It is time, it is high time, and blessed be his

name it is not too late to seek him. I see him now standing with the door wide open beseeching you as you love your souls to enter in—you refuse—and he shuts to the door, saying, "O that thou hadst known, "even them at least in this thy day, the things which "belong unto thy peace—but now they are hid from "thine eyes!"

DISCOURSE XIX.

NATHANIEL.

And Nathaniel said unto him, can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, come and see. Jesus saw Nathaniel coming to him, and saith of him, behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! Nathaniel saith unto him, whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. Nathaniel answered and said unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God: thou art the King of Israel. Jesus answered and said unto him, because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these.—John i. 46 to 50.

MUCH of the excellency of the scripture lies in this —that it does not state things in general representations, but descends to particulars—that it does not place them before us in speculative notions, but in practical effects —that it does not describe them only, but exemplifies —so that we see them alive and in motion.

The passage of scripture which is now to engage our attention is peculiarly interesting and instructive. It is a narrative of the interview between our Lord and Nathaniel. It leads us

First, to observe the advantages of occasional solitude.—What was Nathaniel doing under the fig tree? We are not informed. Perhaps he was reading the scripture—perhaps he was engaged in meditation—perhaps he was praying—perhaps he was joining himself to the Lord in a perpetual covenant, saying, "Lord

"I am thine, save me, and manifest thyself to me." Some purpose had allured him there, which our Saviour noticed and approved; he saw him *in secret* and he now *rewards him openly*. Does he see us? are we strangers to retirement? Surely if we are christians, and concerned for the welfare of our souls, we shall often retire and find that we have much to do alone. I pity the man whose life is full of action, and void of thought. I pity the professor who lives only in public, who is always hearing sermons, who pays very little attention to the duties of the family, and none to those of the closet.

It is alone that we disengage ourselves from the dominion of the world: the world conquers us in a crowd, when our senses are dazzled, and our minds amused, and we are too much occupied to find out the cheat—but when we are withdrawn from it, when we calmly consider it as an object of lonely contemplation, O how is its importance diminished, how is its influence reduced—ah! it is then we sigh—*vanity of vanities, all is vanity*. It is alone that conscience operates, that motives impress, that truth is examined and applied. It is alone that we obtain a knowledge of ourselves; there we can examine our condition, investigate our characters, discover our follies and our weaknesses. Alone we can be familiar with God and divulge to him secrets which we could not communicate to the dearest friend, or express in any public, or social exercises of religion.

O I love the fig tree! I love to go forth from among the works of man to enjoy the creation of God: to enter a wood—to walk through a field of standing corn—to follow the windings of a river—to view the playfulness of the lambs—to listen to the varied melody of the birds—O here is nothing to vex, nothing to pollute. What an innocency, what a softness does it spread over the mind—how disposed is the heart to welcome and cherish every devotional sentiment!

" O sacred solitude ! divine retreat !
" Choice of the prudent, envy of the great—
" There from the ways of men laid safe ashore,
" We smile to hear the distant tempest roar :
" There blest with health, with business unperplext,
" This life we cherish, and insure the next."

Secondly. Let us remark how perfectly acquainted our Saviour is with our most private concerns. *Whence knowest thou me?* asks Nathaniel when our Saviour had in few words developed his character. Jesus answered—*when thou wast under the fig tree I saw thee.* This good man imagined himself alone there; he supposed no eye saw him. No wonder therefore he was surprised to hear a person who appeared only a man like himself announcing the whole affair, no wonder he was immediately convinced of his Messiaship, and exclaimed, *Rabbi thou art the son of God, thou art the king of Israel.* To know all persons and things infallibly is the prerogative of God only; He therefore claims it in distinction from all creatures: " the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately " wicked, who can know it? I the Lord search the " heart, I try the reins even to give every man accor- " ding to his ways, and according to the fruit of his " doings." And what says our Lord in his address to John? " The churches shall know that I am he who " searcheth the reins and hearts, and I will give unto " every one of you according to your works." In the days of his flesh, actions were not necessary to inform him, nor did he derive additional discovery from the declarations of others: " he knew all men and needed " not that any should testify of man: for he knew what " was in man."

Let us remember therefore, that " the eyes of the " Lord are in every place, beholding both the evil and " the good." Of this he will give proof hereafter, when " he shall bring every work into judgment with every " secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." It will be in vain for the sinner then to say—when his

wickedness is published to the world—*whence knowest thou this?*—I saw thee, says the judge divising mischief upon thy bed, I saw thee walking in a way that was not good, I saw thee endeavoring to stifle every conviction of conscience and to banish every serious reflection from the mind—Thou hast always stood in my presence—thou hast always sinned under mine eye. I beheld all thy actions, I heard all thy words, all thy thoughts were open to my view—and here they all are—

—But let the righteous rejoice. He sees their situations, their trials, their dangers, their fears and their desires. He has "engraven them upon the palms of "his hands, their walls are continually before him."

Let the broken hearted penitent be encouraged. Godly sorrow affects loneliness. Into many a corner you retire to *pour out tears unto God:* well, thither his eye follows you—"to this man will he look, even to "him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and that trem-"bleth at his word. And the Lord said unto Anani-"as, arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, "and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, "of Tarsus: for behold he prayeth."

Thirdly, sincerity in religion, is a quality which our Saviour calls upon us to observe and admire. What an honorable character, as he approaches him, does he give Nathaniel? "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom "is no guile." By calling him an *Israelite*, he distinguishes him from other nations, and by calling him an Israelite *indeed*, he distinguishes him from his own nation. For all *were not Israel who were of Israel.* From the beginning "he was not a Jew who was one "outwardly, neither was that circumcision which was "outward in the flesh; but he was a Jew who was one "inwardly, and circumcision was that of the heart in "the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise was not "of men, but of God." Now Nathaniel was one of these true Israelites; he was in reality, as well as by profession, one of the people of God. And the evi-dence he gave of this, was his freedom from guile.

But our Saviour does not say he has no guilt—a man may be freckled, or have spots, and not be painted. A christian is not sinlessly pure—he has many unallowed and bewailed infirmities—but guile he has not: he is no hypocrite. He does not in religion ascend a stage to assume a character which does not belong to him. He *is* what he appears to be. There is a correspondence between his professions and actions, his meaning and his words. He is upright in his dealings with himself—in his dealings with his fellow creatures—and in his dealings with his God. He is all of a piece. He is the same alone as in company: the same in his own house as in the house of God: the same in prosperity as in adversity.

This is the character that stands fair with his own conscience. This is the character that enthrones himself in the esteem of others. This is the character that the King of Glory delights to honor. "The prayer "of the upright is his delight. Light is sown for the "righteous, and joy for the upright in heart. The up- "right shall dwell in thy presence. The Lord God is "a sun and shield, the Lord will give grace and glory: "no good thing will he withold from them that walk "uprightly. Hast thou—said he to Satan—hast thou "considered my servant Job that there is none like him "in the earth, a perfect and upright man, one that fear- "eth God, and escheweth evil." And placing such a character before us in a situation the most sublime and awful, he says, "mark the perfect man, and behold the "upright, for the end of that man is peace." There are two reasons why he calls upon us to admire a Nathaniel. The one is the *rareness* of the character. It is not to be seen every day. Many make no pretensions to religion, and many have only *a form of godliness*, while *they deny the power thereof.*

"Broad is the road that leads to death,
"And thousands walk together there;
"But wisdom shews a narrow way,
"With—here—and there—a traveller."

The other is the *excellency* of the character. It is indispensibly necessary in all religious concerns—nothing can be a substitute for this integrity—nothing that we can say, nothing that we can do, nothing that we can suffer. Without this, every thing else will only render us the more vile and abominable. Judas is called—a devil. On the other hand where this is found and God sees that a man acts conscientiously, and from a sincere desire to please and glorify him, he will pass by many mistakes, pardon many imperfections, and accept him "according to what he has, not according to "what he has not."

And this leads us to a fourth remark. There may be true grace, where there is at present very little light. This was the case with Nathaniel. His knowledge as yet was small; his mind was contracted, and he labored under low prejudices. He had no apprehension of a Messiah, distinguished by poverty and suffering. And because Nazareth was a wicked place, and a place of obscurity, he concluded nothing good or great could originate from thence. Nevertheless he was open to conviction—he complied with the invitation, come and see—he immediately "believed with the heart and "confessed with the tongue"—and our Saviour pleased with his proficiency, promises to *lead him into all truth.*

Now this may be the case with others. And indeed so far am I from supposing it necessary to evidence the reality of a man's conversion, that he should in every thing see clearly at first; that I commonly suspect those that are all at once so ripe in knowledge, and so high in doctrine. These disproportionate notionalists remind me of those unhappy children whose head grows so much faster than their bodies—it is the effect of disease or weakness of constitution, not of health and vigor. I love to see knowledge, experience, and practice advancing together "unto a perfect man, unto "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." *That which* comes up in a night may wither in a night —*we dislike* mushroom piety. If we look into nature,

we shall find things slower in their growth, in proportion to their excellency. How rapidly nettles and thistles, and reeds, and osiers spring up to maturity: but the oak is as much slower in attaining its perfection as it is more firm in its grain, more durable in continuance, more important in its use.

Let us not then conclude that a man is a stranger to divine grace, because he is unable at present to go all our lengths in sentiment. It is not possible for us to determine in certain disadvantageous circumstances, with how much ignorance in the judgment true grace in the heart may be connected. How little of the plan of salvation did Peter know when our Saviour said, "blessed art thou Simon Bargona, for flesh and blood "hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father who "is in heaven." As the sanctification of the soul, so the illumination of the mind is gradual, and surely intellectual defects are no more wonderful than moral ones.

Nor let us be anxious to force upon him doctrines which at present he is not prepared to receive. Our Saviour said to his disciples, "I have many things to say "unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." Where the heart is right with God, a growing experience in divine things will after a while make room for the admission of every important truth.

And therefore we remark finally. That where grace is real, it will in due time be attended with clearer light. "Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig "tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things "than these." Grace is an active principle and leads us to use what we have—and "to him that hath shall "be given, and he shall have more abundance." It disposes us to go on, "and then shall we know if we follow "on to know the Lord." It inspires reverence and humility, and a dependence on divine teaching—and "the "secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he "will shew them his covenant: the meek will he guide "*in judgment*, and the meek will he teach his way."

Let not thy deficiencies therefore cast thee down. You are under the care of one who will "not break a bruis-"ed reed, nor quench a smoaking flax till he send forth "judgment unto victory." He has your welfare at heart. The convictions and desires which he has produced in you are tokens for good. He will never leave you nor forsake, "till he has done all that which he has "spoken to you of. He will perfect that which con-"cerneth you." It is now only the dawn—but the dawn is the pledge and the beginning of noon. "And "the path of the just is as the shining light which shin-"eth more and more unto the perfect day." And whatever discoveries he has already made—remember you shall see *greater things than these*—

First, Greater in this world; more of himself, of his word, of his grace, of his providence. He can enable us to see divine things more clearly, more impressively; with more confidence, and with more appropriation. —Let us not limit our desires, or our hopes.

Secondly, Greater in another world. After all our attainments, this earth is only a land of darkness—but heaven is everlasting light. In these happy regions there is *no darkness at all*.—"Now we see through a "glass darkly; but then face to face: now we know in "part, but then shall we know even as also we are "known. And when that which is perfect is come, "then that which is past, shall be done away."

Then he will fully reveal himself. "We know that "Messiah who is called Christ shall come, and when "he is come he will tell us all things."

DISCOURSE XX.

THE CHARACTERS OF SIN.

What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.—Rom. vi. 21.

IT is of the greatest importance to entertain proper apprehensions of the evil of sin. Hence the scriptures are so large and particular in describing it. They place it before us in every quality, and express it under every allusion that can rouse our indignation, or awaken our fear and our flight. Witness the language of the apostle. "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof "ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is "death."

Behold the enemy. Sin is here arraigned and condemned in all the periods of time: the past, the present, and the future. For the past—here is unprofitableness: for the present—here is disgrace: and for the future, here is hell. Let us then consider sin under these three characters. I. as unfruitful. II. as shameful. III. as destructive.

And I. The apostle asks, "what fruit had ye in "those things?"—The question implies an undeniable negative, and suggests that sin yields no real benefit, no solid satisfaction. It should be otherwise. Sin ought to produce something, for it costs much. It requires the sinner to wage war with himself, to overcome innumerable difficulties, to make the most expensive sacrifices.—Now for a man to labour and toil, to give up all the advantages of religion, to sacrifice his soul, his God, his everlasting welfare, and plunge into "the lake that

" burneth with fire and brimstone"—for nothing! is hard indeed!

And is not this the case? Read the history of wicked nations, families, individuals.—What does the sinner ever gain or enjoy? What that is valuable and satisfactory?—What that deserves the name of fruit? What, that even corresponds with *his own expectation?*—The enemy told Adam and Eve that they should *be as Gods* when his design was to degrade them " below the beasts " that perish." And thus we read of " the deceitful- " ness of sin;" it attracts by flattery: it destroys by delusion. It looks on with blandishing smiles, but conceals the cloven foot; it presents the bait, but hides the hook; it talks of liberty and indulgence, but this is only to favor its inroads; once admitted, slavery and desolation spread all around. It promises much, but how does it perform? " Though wickedness be sweet in " his mouth, though he hide it under his tongue: though " he spare it, and forsake it not; but keep it still within " his mouth: Yet his meat in his bowels is turned, it is " the gall of asps within him." Sinful gratifications continue no longer than the actions themselves: for then consequences begin to be thought of; reason ascends the throne and scourges; conscience awakes and condemns. Nor is it easy for the sinner to creep along to the commission of his crimes unseen by reason, unobserved by conscience, and O! when they are lookers on!—how by their warnings and reproaches do they embitter his enjoyment! He finds nothing of that contentment and pleasure which he looked for. As he returns home, with the stain and sting of sin! he sighs inwardly—" and is this all? O if this deserves the " name of pleasure, how short-lived, how worthless, " how mean! O that I had hearkened to the voice of " wisdom and kindness, which said, turn ye not aside " from following the Lord—turn ye not aside: for then " should ye go after vain things who cannot profit or " deliver; for they are vain."

Suppose now a sinner was compelled to rise and an-

swer this question, truly—how has sin advanced your well-being? What has it done for you? What has it done for your connections, for your bodies, for your souls, for your property, for your reputation? Suppose the swearer was to tell us what he has gained by his oaths; the drunkard by his cups; the sensualist by his uncleanness; the prodigal by his extravagance, his idleness, his evil company; yea, the proud, the envious, the malicious, by indulging their vile tempers? Suppose he was to sum up his expences and his savings; to balance his accounts at the end of a year, of a week, of a day—surely he must find that his gains do not counterbalance his loss, his wages do not reward him for his drudgery, his pleasures do not make him amends for his pains.

Let any one as a man of reason consider his weary steps, his mean condescensions, and compliances; his corroding anxieties, and suspicions; his restless desires, and tormenting fears—when under the dominion of some lust or passion—to gain a fancy or a feather, to acquire the opinion of some poor worm, to pick up a little shining dust, to enjoy some light unsatisfying and low indulgence—and will he not confess that these things are more than unprofitable and vain? Above all what does a christian think when he reviews these wicked courses? He is able now to judge between sin and holiness. He now clearly sees what the practice of sin obliged him to forego, and compelled him to endure; he now clearly sees that it constrained him to live a stranger to his true interest, that it never allowed him one taste of real joy, or one moment of real peace, that it enslaved him, stripped him, starved him.—Since he has served God, he looks back with painful regret upon every hour he spent in the service of sin: it appears to him an hour of inconceivable loss and injury: and he goes on weeping, and taking shame to himself for the part he has acted.

And this brings us, II. to consider the *disgracefulness of sin.* Of these unfruitful things, says the apos-

tle, *ye are now ashamed.* And well they may; for there is nothing in the world so scandalous as sin. Whatever be a man's station, or office, or abilities, sin degrades all, and renders him vile. It is not a shame to be obliged to labor; it is not a shame to be poor and dependent; it is not a shame to be tired and distressed—but it is a shame to be a sinner. For is it not shameful to be a fool? Is it not shameful to be a base coward? Is it not shameful to be a traitor to the best of kings? And to be ungrateful and perfidious to the kindest of all friends? If a benefactor should receive you to his house and afford you all the supplies of his table—would it not be shameful to steal out of his presence, blaspheme his name, and endeavor to counteract all his designs? Enlarge the number of images—select whatever may be deemed base and scandalous among men, and be assured it will apply with infinitely greater force to the evil of sin. We say again, nothing is so degrading, nothing can be so shameful as sin.

But to do justice to this part of our subject it may be necessary to observe that there are three kinds of shame which attend sin. The first is natural; the second gracious; and the third penal.

There is a *natural* shame which arises in men, from the commission of sin. This it was that made our first parents hide themselves among the trees of the garden as soon as they had transgressed the divine command—so close did shame tread on the heels of guilt. This class of emotions may be in a great measure subdued by continuance in sin; for sin is of an hardening tendency. Accordingly we read of some who "hide not "their sin like Sodom." Jeremiah says of some, "were "they ashamed when they had committed abomina- "tion? Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither "could they blush." And the apostle speaks of some who "glory in their shame." But these characters are not general, and this shamefulness in sinning is not easily, and perhaps never was perfectly attained. "The "eye of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying,

"no eye shall see me: and disguiseth his face. For "the morning is to them even as the shadow of death: " if one know them, they are in the terrors of the sha- " dow of death."—Hence they not only repair to corners and elude observation—which they would not do if there was any thing that tended to their praise: but hence also they frame excuses and apologies. And if not ashamed of their proceedings, why attempt to deny or palliate? Why plead mistake, ignorance, surprise, infirmity?—Why ascribe their sins to weakness or necessity, rather than to inclination or choice—unless they deemed them a disparagement to their character? Hence it is—that the sinner cannot endure to be alone, or bear to dwell on his own actions. Though naturally full of self-love and admiration, he slips away from his own dear presence, and shuns all intercourse with his greatest favorite. And why? Because he is ashamed even to meet *himself.* Upon the same principle too, when arrived at a certain pitch of iniquity, he abandons the moral world, and mingles only with those of his own quality: for here mutual wickedness creates mutual confidence, and keeps them from reproaching one another.

There is also a *gracious* shame which accompanies repentance unto life. This shame does not spring from a fear of the discovery of sin; but from a sense of the pollution and odiousness of it. Some crimes are universally considered as abominable; but *all* sin appears so to the real penitent: and he is now ashamed of things which pass uncensured in the world and which once produced no uneasiness in himself. Conversion changes not only a man's state, but his affections and his convictions; sin appears in consequence of it, exceeding sinful; and O what holy self-abhorrence, and loathing, and shame are now felt! The publican standing afar off, " would not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven. " Mine iniquities, says David, have taken hold upon me, " so that I am not able to look up." Ezra said, " O my " God, I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face to

" thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over " our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the hea- " vens." And returning, Ephraim smote upon his thigh and confessed, " I am ashamed and even con- " founded because I did bear the reproach of my youth." And so these believing Romans were *now* ashamed of the sins even of former years. And this ingenuous shame will be in proportion to our perception of the glory, and the goodness of God. The more we think of his patience in bearing with us while we are rebelling against him, and of his mercy and grace in pardoning our sins, and adopting us into his family after all our provocations; the more shall we be affected with our vileness in offending him.

There is also a *penal* shame, by which we mean that shame which attends sin in a way of punishment: for God has so ordered things, that if a man be not ashamed of his sins, he shall be put to shame by them. And how often, and in how many instances is the transgressor dishonored in this world? See the professor of religion—not " reproached for the sake of Christ:" this would be his honor—but " buffetted for his faults:" suffering " not for well-doing but for evil-doing."—There goes your saint! See the miser. " He is a " proverb and a bye-word." See the extortioner. How many " curse his habitation." Behold the adulterer; " whoso committeth adultery with a woman " lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth " his own soul: a wound and dishonor shall he get, " and his reproach shall not be wiped away." So true is the reflection of Solomon, that—" a wicked man is " loathsome, and cometh to shame."

But this will be more especially the case hereafter. Of the Israel of God we read that " they shall not be " ashamed nor confounded, world without end:" of christians that they shall " have confidence, and not be " ashamed before him at his coming." But this *implies the reverse*; and we are assured that the wicked *will "rise to* shame, and everlasting contempt"—

ashamed in themselves ; and contemned—by each other, by saints, by angels, and by the judge himself.

And O ! when they see to what disgrace they have wilfully reduced themselves ; when they hear all the wickedness of their hearts, as well as lives published before an assembled world—what wonder is it that they call to " the mountains and the rocks to fall on them, " and hide them"—not only from wrath, but also from confusion of face.

And thus, we have, Thirdly, reached the conclusion of this dreadful course, which is—death : " for the end " of these things is death." And by death the apostle includes much more than the dissolution of the body. This indeed was the produce of sin : " by one man, sin " entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death " hath passed upon all men, because all have sinned." But besides the universal and unavoidable law of mortality which sin has established, there are many instances recorded in the scripture, of God's inflicting death immediately upon sinners, in a way of judgment. Lot's wife, Nadab and Abiba, Ananias and Saphira, are proofs that even in this sense, " the end of these " things is death." And if we had an inspired history of present times, and could trace up to their proper causes those effects which are now confounded in the common course of things, we should perhaps find the destruction of many a transgressor originating in the same way. And what assurance have *you* that the next time you *take his name in vain*, or *make a lie*, you shall not be instantly sent from the place of sinning to the place of suffering ?

Death also sometimes attends sin, not only as an immediate judgment from God, but as a natural consequence of vice. It is said that " bloody and deceitful " men shall not live out half their days." How many criminals come to an untimely end at the gallows ? How frequently do persons, by anger, intemperance, and such courses, hasten on dissolution, and become self-murderers ? Many might have lived longer had they

lived better: and have enjoyed a good old age, had it not been for a profligate youth: but now, if they drag on a miserable existence at all, they are "filled with "the sins of their youth, which lie down with them in "the grave." An old divine says, the board has killed more than the sword. And a physician of great repute, has given it as his opinion, that scarcely one in a thousand dies a natural death.

But what the apostle principally intends, is—not the corruption of the body in the grave, but the destruction of both body and soul in hell. It is what the scripture calls, the *second death*. It is what our Saviour means, when he says, "he that believeth not, shall be damned." It is not an extinction of being, but of happiness, and of hope. Such is the end of sin. And it is a dreadful end; it is a righteous end; it is a certain end.

It is a dreadful end. Nothing that we can here feel or fear, deserves to be compared with it. Think of the degree, and the duration of this misery. Reflect upon those intimations of it which we find in the scripture. Think of being "bound hand and foot, and cast into "outer darkness, where there shall be weeping and "wailing, and gnashing of teeth." Think of a place, "where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quench-"ed." Think of the sentence, "depart ye cursed, into "everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his an-"gels." Surely there is enough in one of these representations to freeze a man with horror, and to keep him from sin all his life long! "It is a fearful thing to "fall into the hands of the living God?"

It is a righteous end. And hence, the wicked themselves will be *speechless:* not one of them will be able to complain "I do not deserve this: he deals very "hardly with me." Had not this doom been as just as it is dreadful, God with whom there is no unrighteousness, would never have assigned it as the portion of sin. It is not possible for us to know all the demerit of sin; because we know not fully, the excellencies *it has insulted*, the obligations it has violated, the effects

it has produced in the creation of God. But there is one who is infinitely wise; let us rest satisfied with the judgment of the judge. And one thing we may observe, if the greatness of the penalty confounds us, viz. that in proportion as beings are holy, sin appears to them evil: thus, sin appears much more evil to a saint than to a sinner; by the same rule it appears more evil to an angel than to a saint; and infinitely more evil to God than to an angel.

Finally, it is a certain end. From what quarter can you derive a hope to escape? The power of God enables him to inflict this misery. "Hast thou an arm like "God, or canst thou thunder with a voice like his?" The holiness of God excites him to inflict this misery. He "is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. The "wicked shall not stand in his sight, he hateth all "workers of iniquity." The truth of God binds him to inflict this misery. The word is gone out of his mouth, and shall not return. "The scripture cannot "be broken;" and there "the wrath of God is reveal-"ed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrigh-"teous of men. The wicked shall be turned into hell, "with all the nations that forget God. Upon the "wicked God shall rain down snares, fire and brim-"stone, and an horrible tempest; this shall be the por-"tion of their cup."

He therefore that expects any other end of his pride, his avarice, his swearing, his sabbath breaking, his disobedience, than death, is *sporting himself with his own deceivings;* and is even aggravating his doom by presumption and unbelief: "and it shall come to pass, "when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless "himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though "I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drun-"kenness to thirst. The Lord will not spare him, but "then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall "smoke against that man, and all the curses that are "written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord "*shall blot out* his name from under heaven." And

is it possible for you to lie down to sleep, when you know that God is bound to punish you: and under an oath to destroy you?

What use should we make of this subject? First, remember the particulars of this discourse; seriously reflect upon them, and resolve to have "no more fellow-"ship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather "reprove." Ask yourselves—"since I went astray—"what have I got but shame—and what can I get but "death." With this beat off all the solicitations of sin—"away—what can you offer me? Do you think I "am in love with disgrace, or in want of hell?" Surely *the workers of iniquity have no knowledge;* surely the heart of the sons of *men is full of madness*—or they could not be induced to continue a moment longer in a course so unprofitable, so scandalous, so fatal—especially since there is such an encouragement afforded to all who are willing to leave it: "let the wicked forsake "his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and "let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy "upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly "pardon."

Secondly, let those who are delivered from this condition be thankful. "By nature children of wrath, "even as others; sometimes foolish and disobedient, "deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in "envy and malice, hateful, and hating one another—"such—such were some of you; but ye are washed, "but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name "of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God." And you are saying, "not by works of righteousness "which we have done, but according to his mercy, he "saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renew-"ing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abun-"dantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being "justified by his grace we should be made heirs accor-"ding to the hope of eternal life." Admire and adore *the freeness,* the efficacy, the riches of this grace, by *which you* are what you are. And be cautious, and

watchful in future. Will you turn again to folly? Would you listen to your old seducer, now you know that shame and death always follow his steps? Do you want another taste of this infamy and hell? "And now "what hast thou to do in the way of Egypt, to drink "the waters of Sihor? or what hast thou to do in the "way of Assyria, to drink the waters of the river? "Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy "backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and "see, that it is an evil thing and bitter that thou hast "forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not "in thee, saith the Lord God of hosts."

To conclude. Mark the difference between the service of sin, and the service of God. It holds in all the articles we have reviewed. If sin be unfruitful—godliness is not: *godliness is profitable unto all things.* Take a christian and ask him—what fruit have you had in all these duties and ordinances; in all this self-denial and separation from the world? O, says the christian—much every way. "In keeping his command-"ments there is great reward." I have found *rest unto my soul.* His *yoke is easy, and his burden is light.* His *ways are ways of pleasantness,* and all *his paths are peace.*

If sin is shameful—holiness is not. The work in which it employs us *is honorable and glorious.* I do, says the christian, indeed blush—but not in the sense you mean. I am ashamed—but it is at what I have left undone—not at what I have done. I am ashamed, but it is of my progress: not of my course. I am ashamed, but it is of myself—not of my master. No, he has dealt well with me. As far as I have sought him he has been found of me. As far as I have trusted in him he has not disappointed me. I follow him from conviction; and I am not ashamed to avow my adherence to him, and my dependence upon him.

If sin ends in death—religion does not. While the possessor has his *fruit unto holiness,* his *end is everlasting life.* And it is the end that crowns all. We have

seen that religion has many great advantages at present; but if it had not—if it were all gloom and bondage, and hardship—it has this incomparable recommendation—it ends well: ends in *glory, honor, immortality, and eternal life.* If the way be rough, it leads to heaven. If the gate be strait, it opens into the paradise of God. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for "the end of that man is peace."

"Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, my "servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry: behold, "my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: be- "hold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be asha- "med: behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, "but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl "for vexation of spirit."

"Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is "not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth "not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that "which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fat- "ness. Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, "and your soul shall live: and I will make an everlast- "ing covenant with you, even the sure mercies of Da- "vid."

DISCOURSE XXI.

ACQUIESCENCE IN THE WILL OF GOD.

And the king said unto Zadok, carry back the ark of God into the city : if I shall find favor in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and shew me both it, and his habitation. But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee : behold here am I : let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.—2 Sam. xvi. 25, 26.

IT is very desirable to teach by example. This mode of tuition is the most pleasing, the most intelligible, and the most impressive. How useful to a scholar is a copy? How much does a builder aid our apprehension by giving us a model of the edifice he means to rear? In reading history, how much more are we struck with the representation of a battle than by any rules of war?

So it is in spiritual things. The various subjects of religion are most advantageously placed before us, not in their abstraction—but embodied, enlivened, exemplified. We want instances; facts. We naturally inquire how did faith operate in Abraham, and meekness in Moses? We are anxious to know how men of acknowledged religion behaved themselves in such a season of prosperity, or in such an hour of distress?

In this, as well as in every thing else essential to the welfare of man, the scripture comes in to our assistance, and holding up to our view a succession of characters in diversified situations, furnishes us with warnings, encouragements, motives as our circumstances may require.

The condition of David when he spake the words

which we have read, was severely trying. His son Absalom had commenced a powerful rebellion; in consequence of which he was compelled with a few faithful followers to leave Jerusalem; and pass over the brook Kidron towards the way of the wilderness. "And lo, Zadok also was there, and all the Levites "with him, bearing the Ark of the covenant of God: "and they set down the ark of God, and Abiathar "went up, until all the people had done passing out of "the city."

Here he paused: and here I call upon you to observe him. In such a distressing and perplexing condition, the mind will be *driven with the wind, and tossed*, unless there be some grand principle to anchor it. This Job had. "Behold, I go forward, but he is not there: "and backward, but I cannot perceive him: on the left "hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: "he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot "see him; but he knoweth the way that I take; when "he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." And this David had. His religion aided him; it shone forth in this darkness; it glorified this trouble, and rendered it the occasion of exercising several pious dispositions, which we are going to remark. "And "the king said unto Zadok, carry back the ark of God "into the city; if I shall find favor in the eyes of the "Lord, he will bring me again, and shew me both it, "and his habitation. But if he thus say, I have no "delight in thee: behold here am I; let him do to "me as seemeth good unto him." Behold here—his love to devotion—his dependence upon divine providence—his submission to the will of God.

I. Observe his estimation of divine means, and ordinances. The ark and the tabernacle were much more to him than his throne, and his palace. And therefore he only mentions these. *Carry*, says he, *carry back the ark of God—if I shall find favor in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again*—to my house *and my family*?—No: but he will bring me again, and

—*shew me both it, and his habitation*—the ark and the tabernacle. Not that he undervalued the privilege of a safe return. Religion is not founded on the destruction of humanity. We are not required to contemn the good things of nature and providence. Indeed were we to despise them, it would not be possible for us to discover resignation under the loss of them. Then our submission appears when we know their value, and are capable of relishing them, and nevertheless can willingly give them up at the divine call.

Yea, when we are not sufficiently sensible of our obligations to God for temporal blessings, he often teaches us their value, by their loss. In sickness, the man has prized health, and has said, how little did I think of the goodness of God, in continuing the blessing so long; if I enjoy it again, "all my bones shall say who is a "God like unto thee." Were an enemy to invade our shores; were the din of war to drive us from our dwellings, carrying our infants in our arms; were we oppressed by the exactions of tyranny—we should soon feelingly acknowledge the advantages of national safety, of civil liberty, of wise and good laws! Owing to our present connections and circumstances, a thousand things demand a share of our attention and gratitude.

But our attention and our gratitude should be wisely exercised. We should be principally affected with *the unsearchable riches of Christ*; we should supremely regard our souls, and those *spiritual blessings* which belong to our everlasting welfare. Minds truly gracious measure their situations and conveniences in this world by the opportunities they give them of service for God, and of communion with him. Hezekiah asks in distress, "what is the sign that I shall go up into the house "of the Lord? One thing, says David, have I desired "of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in "the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to be-"hold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his "temple."

Are you like minded? If you are—you will not

suffer a little trouble, or a little expence to keep you from the house of God. When compelled to abstain from his courts, you will feel your exclusion painful; with a mournful pleasure, you will think of the seasons when you went "to the house of God, with the voice "of joy and gladness;" with longing desire you will ask, *when shall I come and appear before God?*

This will influence servants in the choice of a place. They will forego a number of advantages, and put up with a number of difficulties, rather than be deprived of the means of grace.

This will actuate the man of property in fixing the bounds of his habitation.—Many persons in leaving off business go down into the country; and looking around them, say, behold yonder is a fine wood, there are beautiful meadows, and here is a fine stream of water. But the christian would inquire before he pitched his tent; is *the tree of life* here? Can I here have access to the *wells of salvation?* Can I *go in and out, and find pasture?*

II. See his faith in divine providence. David views his defeat or his success, his exile or his return as suspended entirely on the will of God. He does not balance probabilities—"these things are for me, and those "are against me: when I think on these circumstan- "ces, I feel hope, but when I dwell on those, I trem- "ble for fear. I know the issue turns upon the pleas- "ure of the Almighty. He bringeth down, and he "lifteth up. When he giveth peace, then who can "make trouble? And when he hideth his face, then "who can behold him, whether it be done against a "nation, or a man only."

Not that he acted the part of an enthusiast, and despised the use of means. This appears obviously from the measures he devised, especially his employing the council of Hushai. But while he used means, he did not trust in them. He knew that duty is ours, and *events the* Lord's. He therefore looks beyond all instruments and second causes, to an agent, "who work-

" eth all things after the council of his own will.—If I " shall find favor in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring " me again, and shew me both it and his habitation."

David knew it was easy for him to take wisdom from the wise, and courage from the brave; and to confound all his devices.

He knew also, that it was equally easy for God to turn again his captivity. He knew that his wisdom is infinite, his power almighty, his resources endless; he knew that " his council shall stand, and he will do all " his pleasure." It would be well for us to remember this in our difficulties, and to view a change in our distressing circumstances, as turning simply on the will of God. " If he speaks the word, I shall be healed. If " he favors my cause, I am released. He knows how " to deliver. Nothing is too hard for the Lord. It " does not become his people ever to despair. He " cannot come too late. Balaam may prepare altars, " and offer sacrifices; but how can he curse whom God " hath not cursed? Nebuchadnezzar may heat the fur- " nace, and the faithful servants of God may be even " thrown in: but the God whom they serve is continual- " ly able to deliver them. Had he interposed earlier, " the salvation would not have appeared so marvellous " and divine. He often makes our extremity his op- " portunity. For the Lord shall judge his people, and " repent himself of his servants, when he seeth that their " power is gone, and there is none shut up, or left."

III. He professes a full acquiescence in the disposal of the Almighty. " But if he thus say, I have no de- " light in thee: behold here am I, let him do to me as " seemeth good to him." Here are no imprecations of vengeance against seditious subjects, and a rebellious son; no bitter complaints of instruments; no charging *God foolishly;* no *teaching God knowledge.* He falls down at his feet, wishing to be raised up, but willing to remain. He mourns, but he does not murmur. Thus Eli before him had said, " It is the Lord: let him do " *what* seemeth him good." And thus his Son and his

Lord long after, and almost in the very same spot exclaimed, " O my Father, if this cup may not pass away " from me except I drink it, thy will be done."

I have been thinking what helped to produce this disposition in David. Now there were two things in himself, and two in God, which promoted this resignation; and I mention them because they ought equally to influence us in our calamities.

There were two things in himself. The one—was a sense of his own unworthiness. A consciousness of our desert is necessary to our submission under the afflictive dispensations of providence. When this prevails, instead of wondering at our trials, we only wonder at our exemptions, and mitigations, and say " it is " of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, be- " cause his compassions fail not." It was thus with David. A recollection of the ungrateful, and guilty part which he had acted, stopped his mouth, and made him silent in the dust. " I have behaved more undu- " tifully towards my father, and my sovereign than ever " Absalom did towards his. I will bear the indigna- " tion of the Lord, because I have sinned against him. " Why should a living man complain, a man for the pu- " nishment of his sin? Surely it is meet to be said un- " to God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend " any more. That which I see not, teach thou me; if " I have done iniquity, I will do no more."

The other was—his ignorance. For while the former convinced him that he had no right to choose, this persuaded him that he had no ability. He knew that he had often been deceived; deceived both by his hopes and fears; that he had desired things which would have been his ruin, and dreaded things which had proved some of his chief mercies; " that the way of man is not in himself, it is " not in man that walketh to direct his steps." Hence he referred himself to God, as to one who knew what was best for him, saying, " Lord my heart is not " *haughty, nor* mine eyes lofty; neither do I exercise

" myself in great matters, or in things too high for me. " Surely I have behaved and quieted myself as a child " that is weaned of his mother, my soul is even as a " weaned child."

There were also two things in God which aided this acquiescence. First, his sovereignty. " Has he not a " right to do what he will with his own? Did not he " find me a poor shepherd-boy? Did not he raise me " to the throne?—And if he requires me to lay down the " sceptre, and reduces me back again to humble life— " he is righteous; his authority is unquestionable. I " have nothing that I can call my own; and he can take " nothing that is not his." Secondly, his goodness. The authority of God awes us, and we say,

" Peace all our angry passions then,
" Let each rebellious sigh
" Be silent at his *sovereign will*,
" And every murmur die."

But it is something else that produces the cheerfulness of submission. It is the principle which actuates him —which is love: it is the end he has in view—which is our profit: it is a belief that however things may be determined, with regard to our feelings—they " shall " all work together for our good;" it is a conviction that if we suffer, these sufferings are as necessary as the knife to the vine, the furnace to the gold, and medicine to the body—this and this alone can enable us cordially to say: " behold, here I am, let him do to me as seem- " eth good unto him."

Let us be followers of David in this holy resignation of ourselves to the pleasure of God. There are two reasons why you should aspire after this state of mind.

First. It will be very advantageous to yourselves. In passing through a vale of tears you must expect to weep. And as you cannot escape afflictions, surely common prudence will lead you to ask how you are to bear them? Now this acquiescence in the will of God is *the preparation of the gospel of peace*, with which you are

to be shod. Thus prepared, you may travel on through the wilderness—but what will you do if bare-footed, when you meet with thorns and briars? To vary and enlarge the metaphor; impatience turns the rod into a scorpion. Patience lines the yoke while it presses the neck, with down; and enables the man to say, it is good for me to bear it. There is nothing so likely to obtain the removal of your afflictions as this submissive frame of mind. In chastising a child what would move you like his yielding; like the ingenuous confession—"Indeed my dear father I deserve this; and I hope it "will be useful to me through life"—I borrow the image—"I have surely heard Ephraim bemoan himself "thus, thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as "a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, "and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God. "Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after "that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh; I was "ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear "the reproach of my youth. Is Ephraim my dear son? "Is he a pleasant child? For since I spake against "him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore my "bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mer-"cy upon him, saith the Lord."

Secondly, nothing can be more honorable to religion. To surrender ourselves to the divine disposal is the purest act of obedience: to subdue our unruly passions, is the greatest instance of heroism. It ennobles the possessor. It renders him a striking character. Nothing is so impressive as the exercise of the passive graces. It carries conviction into the minds of beholders, and forces them to acknowledge that there is such a reality, and such excellency—because there is such an efficacy in *the glorious gospel.* "The ornament of a meek and "quiet spirit, is in the sight of God of great price."

But you say—Is all this attainable? It is. We readily confess that it is no easy thing thus to refer ourselves to God; especially in practice. We here see the *christian in his best frame, and in his best moments.*

But it is practicable—it has been exemplified by thousands of the same nature and infirmities with yourselves. It is practicable—I mean by divine grace. And this grace is sufficient for you, and is promised to you. "Ask, and it shall be given you, seek, and ye shall find, "knock and it shall be opened unto you: for whoso "asketh receiveth, and whoso seeketh findeth, and to "him that knocketh it shall be opened."

We conclude with the remark of an old divine. That we may not complain of the present—let us view God's hand in all events: and that we may not be afraid of the future—let us view all events in God's hand. Amen.

DISCOURSE XXII.

THE CHILD JESUS.

(CHRISTMAS.)

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of peace.—Isaiah ix. 6.

—TO "him gave all the prophets witness." But what testimony was ever borne him like this—Here! we have a prediction at once the most clear in its application, the most glorious in its contents, the most consolatory in its design. And the return of this day renders it peculiarly seasonable. Let us therefore indulge ourselves in a few reflections—upon his *incarnation*—his *empire*—and his *names*.

I. We have here his coming in the flesh. "Unto "us a child is born, unto us a son is given."

It is remarkable, that all this should be spoken of as *present*. In the time of Isaiah, the event could only be prophecy—but it is related as history. The church of those days could only have expected this blessing—but they mention it as actually enjoyed—a child *is* born; a son *is* given! Purpose and execution; promise and accomplishment are the same with God. *One day* with the Lord is "as a thousand years, and a thousand years "are as one day." The divisions of time which with us mark the past, the present, and the future, are nothing to him whose being is one continual now, and who *says of himself* "I AM is my name, and this is my me-

" morial in all generations." And faith uniting us to God, elevates us to enter into his views, and to partake of his excellencies: " faith is the substance of things " hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

But *for whom* is this blessing designed? who are authorized to say unto *us* a child is born, unto *us* a son is given? The persons to whom he was immediately sent were " the lost sheep of the house of Israel. He " came" first " unto his own, and his own received him " not." This was not however universally the case. There were some " who were looking for redemption " in Jerusalem." Simeon, Anna, and others eagerly embraced him as " the consolation of Israel." Some by his preaching and miracles also believed in him; all his first followers and his twelve apostles also were jews. Since then, an awful " blindness has happened" to this singular people: and " even to this day when " Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart: neverthe- " less when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be " taken away. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it " is written, there shall come out of Zion, the deliver- " er, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob."

But he was to be a more general blessing. " It is a " light thing," says God, " that thou shouldest be my " servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore " the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a " light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation " unto the end of the earth." And hence the angel said to the shepherds, " Behold I bring you good ti- " dings of great joy, which shall be TO ALL PEOPLE." None therefore are excluded from hope on this blessed occasion: he is come to die for the *ungodly*, for *enemies*, for *sinners*. Surely here is a sufficient warrant for personal application to him. Unto you—and you—and you—" is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour " which is Christ the Lord!"—Some indeed, will not eventually derive salvation from him; but he himself has assigned the reason, and beyond this we should not go: " *ye will* not come unto me, that ye might have

"life." If people spurn the remedy how can it cure them?

But what is the *benefit* acknowledged? Unto us "a "child is born," unto us a "son is given." And is there any thing wonderful in this? Do we not hear of it every day? Is it not the privilege of almost every family!—And is there indeed nothing wonderful in the birth of an infant? How marvellous is the union of soul and body; what a mysterious thing is human life; how admirable the provision made to relieve its wants, to support its weakness, and to rear its tender years!

The birth of *any* infant is a far greater event than the production of the sun—the sun is only a lump of senseless matter, it sees not its own light, it feels not its own heat, and with all its grandeur, it will cease to be: but that infant beginning only to breathe yesterday, is possessed of reason—claims a principle superior to all matter; and will live through the ages of eternity!

But this child is all prodigy. He is miraculously conceived; and born of a virgin. His coming "shakes "the heaven and the earth, the sea and the dry land." For what other child did ever the heavens assume a new star? Wise men come from the east? Angels descend from glory? Ye rulers of the earth, *I said ye are Gods*—but with all your pride and vanity—at the birth of your first-born son—the stars roll on in their courses, angels pursue their work: the festivity is confined to human beings, and to a small circle of them: neighbouring countries scarcely hear of it.

What are other children at twelve years of age? The mind is only beginning to open; the ideas are trifling, and unarranged; it is the transition from fool into intelligent. But behold this child, when twelve years old, doing his Heavenly "Father's business, sitting in "the midst of the doctors, both hearing, and asking "them questions. And all that heard him were aston-"ished at his understanding and answers." After this *he went down to Nazareth, and was subject unto his own parents.* And here a large proportion of his life

is concealed from our view. We only know that he received no learned education, and have reason to believe that he labored with his own hands; for in one place he is called *the carpenter*. But when he appeared in public, he spake *as never spake man*. He healed the sick. He raised the dead. He cast out devils. "He went about doing good. He died for our sins. "He rose for our justification. And he entered into "his glory, far above all principality, and power, and "might, and dominion, and every name that is named, "not only in this world, but also in that which is to "come." What a gift then was here! But this brings us

II. To consider his empire: *the government shall be upon his shoulder*. The utmost that a child can be born to is to fill a throne—and we deem this a wonderful honor. But if he should be fortunate enough to reach the envied pre-eminence—what a short time does he hold the sceptre, before it drops from his feeble hand by decays of nature; or be forced from his grasp by the effects of violence? But *the child Jesus* is decreed a permanent, unchangeable authority: "his dominion "is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from "generation to generation. And in the days of these "kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which "shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not "be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces, "and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand "for ever."

And over what a mole hill does the most extensive worldly monarch reign? The babe lying in the manger claims unbounded empire. There is not a being in the universe but is either his subject, or his slave. He has *the keys of hell and of death*. All the affairs of this world are under his management. Nothing occurs by chance. "It is he determines concerning a "nation, and concerning a people" to establish, or to destroy; to enlarge, or to diminish. They are all in his hands, but *as clay in the hand of the* potter. He is *King of Kings and Lord of* Lords, they are amenable to

his authority, they rule by his permission, they are controlled by his power. He girds them and guides them, though they know him not—as far as they move in the direction of his purpose, they are invincible; when they oppose it, a straw checks and overthrows them. He is peculiarly king in Zion. He is *a prince* as well as *a saviour* to his people; and they that know his name not only trust in him, but submit themselves to him. And their submission is natural and cheerful, because he puts his laws into their minds, and writes them in their hearts. While they obey his commands, they also acquiesce in his dispensations. To him they refer all their temporal concerns, and are willing that he should choose their inheritance for them. Thus he has a kingdom within a kingdom; a kingdom of grace within the kingdom of his providence—and the one is subservient to the other. "He is head over all things "unto his body the church:" he has every thing necessary for the defence of his people, and the success of his cause. Therefore this "king shall reign and pros- "per. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, "and from the river unto the ends of the earth. Yea, "all the kings shall fall down before him; all nations "shall serve him. His name shall endure for ever: "his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and "men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him "blessed."

Much has been said on the subject of government, and volumes have been written to ascertain the prerogative of princes, and the duties of subjects. While men are depraved beings, absolute power lodged in the hands of an individual would be dangerous. Authority must therefore be limited; one part of government must be a balance to another, and laws must be placed above men. But it is generally acknowledged, that could a governor be found perfect in wisdom and goodness, who in all cases knew what was proper to be done, and *would be always* inclined to do it—his power could not *be too absolute*, nor his authority too uncontrolled.

Such a being is the Lord Jesus—and therefore he is "the blessed and only Potentate; and has all power "given unto him in heaven and in earth."

But where does this government, thus all his own, rest? *Upon his shoulder.* This may appear to some a coarse image; ancient poetry however has beautified it by representing a man bearing upon his shoulders the pillars of the universe. But what was this fabled Atlas? The world and all its concerns really depend on the redeemer—he "upholdeth all things by the word of "his power." And government upon the shoulder is significant: it implies burden, difficulty. It cannot be administered without much labor and care. And this is one reason among others, why we are commanded "to pray for kings, and for all that are in authority!" Who can need our prayers so much?—What a charge devolves upon a parent, when providence puts into his hands a living mercy, and says, "take this child and "nurse it for me: I constitute thee its governor, and "at thy hands will I require it." What an awful task has the tutor of youth? What a weighty undertaking has the pastor of a congregation?—But think of the affairs of a kingdom. Ask the rulers of this world, whether government be an easy and an enviable concern? How distracted is the head that wears a crown? "I am not able, says Solomon, to go in and out before "so great a people. I am not able, says Moses, to "bear all this people;" hence, he had assistants provided him. The weight of government is too much for one person, and therefore it is divided among many. A king has his council, and ministers, and officers. He cannot be all eye, all ear, all hand; he therefore avails himself of the eyes, the ears, and hands of others. But the King of Saints stands in need of no help: infinite as his empire is, he manages the amazing whole without fatigue, and without perplexity.

Let us review, thirdly, his names. Names are designed to distinguish, to describe, and to honor. And *in common*, a single name is sufficient for a single indi-

vidual. Human excellencies and accomplishments are rare and solitary: one man attends to the stars, and we call him an astronomer; a second is skilled in the species of plants, and we call him a botanist; a third speaks well, and we call him an orator. The name generally sums up all his claims. But what a number, and what a variety of sublime titles are employed to shew forth the praises of our Lord and Saviour—"His "name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, the "Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of "Peace."

I. He is *Wonderful.* And he is so principally in the constitution of his person. Here we see combined deity and humanity; finite, and infinite; all-sufficiency and omnipotence; weariness and want. This is *the great mystery of godliness*, which will for ever employ the admiration of the redeemed—"God was manifest "in the flesh. In the beginning was the word, and the "word was with God, and the word was God. And "the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and "we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotton "of the father) full of grace and truth." Indeed his whole history appears to be unparrallelled. His manner of life, his mode of teaching, his death, his resurrection, and his dealings with his people in providence and grace, are all marvellous.

II. He is *Counsellor.* He is *our advocate with the Father;* he appears for us in court. And while he pleads our cause above, he guides our affairs below. In "him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowl- "edge." He is the source of all spiritual knowledge. *I am come*, said he, "a light into the world, that whoso- "ever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. "Council is mine"—yes, blessed Redeemer, every wrong step we have taken through life, has been occasioned by our disregarding thy instructions. To thee may we henceforth bring all the difficulties we feel with regard to doctrine and duty, experience and prac-

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III. His name shall be called *the mighty God*, and he would not be called so unless he was so. Unless he was so, the attributes which are essential to deity would not be the properties of his nature, and we should never have read of him in the scriptures of truth, as knowing all things, as omnipotent, as every where present, as eternal. Unless he was so, the works which are peculiar to deity, could never have been performed by him, nor the worship which is peculiar to deity, be claimed for him, and rendered to him.—We do not here consider this doctrine controversially; it stands in a situation which shews its importance, and the connection it has with the believer's experience and hope. Thus he is mighty to save; no case however desperate, with regard to ourselves and creatures, can be too hard for him. This principal enters into all his offices; gives infinite value to his righteousness, and efficacy to his death; and renders all he does for us and in us, divine.

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It was thus that he addressed his sorrowing disciples, when he was departing from them: These things have I spoken unto you, that *in me ye might have peace. Peace* I leave with you, *my* peace I give unto you. And remember that there is no peace worth having but *his.* The ungodly and the people of the world, may be insensible of their danger, they may banish reflection from their minds, they may live in what they call pleasure, and say to their soul, take thine *ease*—but there is NO PEACE *saith my God unto the wicked.* But Jesus procures, reveals, produces a peace the most valuable. "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up all "their wounds." Ye weary and heavy laden—let your burdens be what they may—O, go to him—he will *give you rest:* and *his rest shall be* GLORIOUS.

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But what do *you* think of him? Has he "no form "nor comeliness; no beauty that you should desire "him." Do you feel no love to his name? Do you never pray—*Lord save, or I perish?*—What then are we to think of you? What are we to think of the blindness of your understandings, and of the depravity of your affections? Indifferent to him!—What are we to think of your regard to your own safety and happiness? Can you find salvation in any other? What will you do without him, when you come to die? How will you appear before him when he is seated on his great white throne?

For—once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and "to "them that look for him, will he appear a second time, "without sin unto salvation." See the Babe of Bethlehem, the Judge of all! "Behold he cometh with "clouds, and every eye shall see him. But who may "abide the day of his coming, and who shall stand "*when he appeareth?*" Happy those who have loved

and followed him *in the regeneration!* He will "re-
"ceive them to himself, that where he is, there they
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"But where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?

DISCOURSE XXIII.

THE DESIGN OF OUR SAVIOUR's COMING.

(CHRISTMAS.)

IT is a wonderful event which we have this day been called to commemmorate. The fulness of time is arrived: prophecies are accomplished: promises are fulfilled: the expectations of the church are realized: *the desire of all nations* is come—and we have been with the shepherds to Bethlehem, and have seen "the Babe "wrapped in swadling clothes, and lying in a manger." For what purpose has the Son of God assumed our nature, and in circumstances of the deepest humiliation entered our world? A new star has graced his birth: *wise men* have travelled from the East to do him homage; "and a multitude of the heavenly host" have praised God and said, "glory to God in the highest, "and on earth peace, good will towards men. Thus heaven and earth have borne witness to the importance of this event.—But wherein does the importance of it appear? By what title answerable to his character shall we acknowledge him? Wherein lies our concern with him? And why are we so interested in his birth, as to make it the subject of our greatest joy?

Let us call to mind the address of the angel to Joseph, when he announced his conception of the Virgin Mary—

And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS. *For he shall save his people from their sins.*—Mat. i. 21.

Here is a name above every name: a name which is

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as ointment poured forth—It is JESUS. This name wa
not only given by the order of God, but explained b
the same order. Jesus signifies Saviour. But thi
name was not peculiar to him—others had worn i
The Hebrew name which answers to Jesus is Joshu
and two persons had this name expressly given the
under the old testament: the commander who succeed
ed Moses; and the high priest concerned in the build
ing of the second temple. The Levites also in th
days of Nehemiah confess to God; "according to th
"manifold mercies thou gavest them Saviours wh
"saved them out of the hand of their enemies." Suc
a Saviour was Gideon, and Samson, and others.

The name then, is common, but not the reason of th
imposition—"for he shall save his people from the
"sins." As if he had said "others have been calle
"Saviours, because they rescued the body; they wer
"temporal deliverers; they saved the Jews from th
"Egyptians, the Philistines, the Midianites. But th
"child is called a Saviour for a nobler reason—he re
"cues the soul; he is an eternal deliverer; he save
"his people from their sins."

By this explanation, the angel not only distinguish
Jesus from every other Saviour, but opposes the favo
ite prejudices of the nation to which he belonged. Th
Jews expected a Messiah who should be called a Sa
iour—but in this name they found a hero, a conque
or, who should break the civil yoke, free them fro
the tyranny of Rome, and if not lead them to univers
empire, at least restore them to all their original dign
ty in their own land. "But O, ye Jews," says the an
gel, "the Saviour is come to restore you, not to a
"earthly Canaan, but a better, even a heavenly cou
"try. He is come to deliver you, not from civil bon
"dage, but from spiritual slavery; not from Cæsa
"but Satan. He is come to save you from your grea
"est enemies, and these are—not the Romans, b
"YOUR SINS."

Let us not pass over this. Jesus came not to s

gest improvements in agriculture ; plans of commerce ; theories of civil policy—he left the governments of the world as he found them : these are things which fall within the reach of our wisdom to devise, and our power to accomplish. But who could save a soul from sin ?

Let us I. Consider sin as an enemy, and II. See in what manner the Saviour delivers us from it.

We talk of enemies. What should we think of an adversary, who, filled with malice, and armed with power, should invade our country, ravage our fields, destroy our cottages and mansions, our palaces and temples ; who should despoil us of our goods, tear us from our families, deprive us of our liberty, and lead us away in irons to terminate a wretched existence in a dungeon or a mine ! And O ! were a deliverer to arise, to crush the foe, and to save the captives—how should we prize him ! If he had suffered in the struggle, his wounds would be deemed scars of honor. When the ear heard him, it would bless him ; and when the eye saw him it would give witness to him. Our very children, made familiar with the story, would never see him pass along, without exclaiming, Hosanna, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord !— But this enemy would be a friend compared with sin : and such a deliverer therefore, would be nothing compared with the Saviour of sinners. How is it then that we feel so much indifference towards him ? that we are not continually uttering the memory of his great goodness ? that we are not daily praying *let the whole earth be filled with his glory ?* I will tell you why—we do not believe the enemy to be so dreadful. The reason is—that we entertain slight notions of sin. To judge of the importance of a remedy, it is necessary to know the malignity of the disease : to ascertain the claims of a benefactor to our gratitude and love, it is necessary for us to know the evils from which he delivers us.

Every thing turns upon this. If sin be our worst

enemy, it is easy to prove that he who saves us from it, is our best friend. Let us then look at sin, and take three or four views of its evil and malignity.

Behold sin with regard to God. That must be the greatest evil, which is most opposite to the greatest good. In forming our estimate of sin, we are not to judge of it so much by the relation it bears to us, or to our fellow creatures, as by its relation to God; for against *him* it is committed; and every sin strikes at God as much as if no other being was affected by it; and notwithstanding its fatal effects with regard to mankind we may say to God of every transgression, "against thee, thee only have I sinned and done this "evil in thy sight." Sin is enmity against God; against his attributes and his government. God never yet revealed a design which sin hath not withstood: nor given a law which sin has not trampled under foot. Sin deposes God from his sovereignty, abuses his goodness, abhors his holiness, vilifies his wisdom, insults and denies his omniscience, his justice and his power. And hence nothing is so offensive to God. It is called the *abominable thing which he hates.* And we read that he is *of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.* It is a metaphor taken from a person who has such a perfect abhorrence of a thing that he cannot bear the sight; the very thought of it shocks him. What can this be, concerning which Jehovah expresses himself thus strongly: he speaks so of nothing else in the universe. —And this is that which renders man, though the work of his hands, *filthy and abominable;* and constrains even *the God of love, the Father of mercies* to say concerning him, "the wicked shall not stand in my sight, I hate all "workers of iniquity!"

Behold sin in its names. For what term is there expressive of reproach or misery: what image is there that can produce aversion, or fear that is not employed by the scriptures to represent sin. Sin! it is disobedience, *it is* rebellion, it is treason, it is murder, *it is the works of the devil.* Sin! it is ignorance, it is folly, it

is madness. Sin! it is blindness, it is deafness, it is dumbness, it is sickness, it is poison, it is slavery, it is plague, it is death, it is hell. Now as it is said of Nabal, *as the name is, so is the man;* the same may be observed of sin, as the name is, so is the thing. Sin is not libelled by any of these dreadful representations: they are all given us by one who perfectly understands sin, and they fall infinitely short of the subject. For if we compare sin with other evils it will be found substantially to contain them all, and to be the cause of all. This is the fountain which has embittered all our streams, and the seed which has so thickly sown the world with wretchedness.

Behold therefore again the effects of sin. How different is man to what he was originally—but sin has made this change; sin has stripped him of his glory, and taken the crown from his head: *woe unto us that we have sinned.*

Observe the soul of man—It is sin that has debased it, defiled it, robbed it of the image, and banished it from the presence of God—it is this that has filled it with confusion, and regrets, it is this that has produced unruly passions, tormenting anxieties, a terrified conscience, a wounded spirit.

Take the body of man. This was once all immortal, without a defect, a disease, a danger. But *by sin death entered into the world*, and was crowned *king of terrors.* And now "man that is born of a woman is "of few days, and full of trouble." At his birth he enters a labyrinth of thorns and briars, and cannot move without *piercing himself through with many sorrows.* Even every comfort has its cross, and every blessing its curse. And how little of the misery of the world comes under our observation! O could we witness all the pains of the diseased at this moment: could we behold all the effects of war, pestilence and famine; could we see the bones of all the human race, from the death of Abel to this very hour piled into one immense

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THE DESIGN OF OUR SAVIOUR's COMING.

(CHRISTMAS.)

IT is a wonderful event which we have this day been called to commemmorate. The fulness of time is arrived: prophecies are accomplished: promises are fulfilled: the expectations of the church are realized: *the desire of all nations* is come—and we have been with the shepherds to Bethlehem, and have seen "the Babe "wrapped in swadling clothes, and lying in a manger." For what purpose has the Son of God assumed our nature, and in circumstances of the deepest humiliation entered our world? A new star has graced his birth: *wise men* have travelled from the East to do him homage; "and a multitude of the heavenly host" have praised God and said, "glory to God in the highest, "and on earth peace, good will towards men. Thus heaven and earth have borne witness to the importance of this event.—But wherein does the importance of it appear? By what title answerable to his character shall we acknowledge him? Wherein lies our concern with him? And why are we so interested in his birth, as to make it the subject of our greatest joy?

Let us call to mind the address of the angel to Joseph, when he announced his conception of the Virgin Mary—

And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS. *For he shall save his people from their sins.*—Mat. i. 21.

Here is a name above every name: a name which is

as ointment poured forth—It is JESUS. This name was not only given by the order of God, but explained by the same order. Jesus signifies Saviour. But this name was not peculiar to him—others had worn it. The Hebrew name which answers to Jesus is Joshua, and two persons had this name expressly given them under the old testament: the commander who succeeded Moses; and the high priest concerned in the building of the second temple. The Levites also in the days of Nehemiah confess to God; "according to thy "manifold mercies thou gavest them Saviours who "saved them out of the hand of their enemies." Such a Saviour was Gideon, and Samson, and others.

The name then, is common, but not the reason of the imposition—"for he shall save his people from their "sins." As if he had said "others have been called "Saviours, because they rescued the body; they were "temporal deliverers; they saved the Jews from the "Egyptians, the Philistines, the Midianites. But this "child is called a Saviour for a nobler reason—he res-"cues the soul; he is an eternal deliverer; he saves "his people from their sins."

By this explanation, the angel not only distinguishes Jesus from every other Saviour, but opposes the favorite prejudices of the nation to which he belonged. The Jews expected a Messiah who should be called a Saviour—but in this name they found a hero, a conqueror, who should break the civil yoke, free them from the tyranny of Rome, and if not lead them to universal empire, at least restore them to all their original dignity in their own land. "But O, ye Jews," says the angel, "the Saviour is come to restore you, not to an "earthly Canaan, but a better, even a heavenly coun-"try. He is come to deliver you, not from civil bon-"dage, but from spiritual slavery; not from Cæsar "but Satan. He is come to save you from your great-"est enemies, and these are—not the Romans, but "*YOUR SINS.*"

Let us not pass over this. Jesus came not to su

gest improvements in agriculture ; plans of commerce ; theories of civil policy—he left the governments of the world as he found them : these are things which fall within the reach of our wisdom to devise, and our power to accomplish. But who could save a soul from sin ?

Let us I. Consider sin as an enemy, and II. See in what manner the Saviour delivers us from it.

We talk of enemies. What should we think of an adversary, who, filled with malice, and armed with power, should invade our country, ravage our fields, destroy our cottages and mansions, our palaces and temples ; who should despoil us of our goods, tear us from our families, deprive us of our liberty, and lead us away in irons to terminate a wretched existence in a dungeon or a mine ! And O ! were a deliverer to arise, to crush the foe, and to save the captives—how should we prize him ! If he had suffered in the struggle, his wounds would be deemed scars of honor. When the ear heard him, it would bless him ; and when the eye saw him it would give witness to him. Our very children, made familiar with the story, would never see him pass along, without exclaiming, Hosanna, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord !— But this enemy would be a friend compared with sin : and such a deliverer therefore, would be nothing compared with the Saviour of sinners. How is it then that we feel so much indifference towards him ? that we are not continually uttering the memory of his great goodness ? that we are not daily praying *let the whole earth be filled with his glory ?* I will tell you why—we do not believe the enemy to be so dreadful. The reason is—that we entertain slight notions of sin. To judge of the importance of a remedy, it is necessary to know the malignity of the disease : to ascertain the claims of a benefactor to our gratitude and love, it is necessary for us to know the evils from which he delivers us.

Every thing turns upon this. If sin be our worst

enemy, it is easy to prove that he who saves us from it, is our best friend. Let us then look at sin, and take three or four views of its evil and malignity.

Behold sin with regard to God. That must be the greatest evil, which is most opposite to the greatest good. In forming our estimate of sin, we are not to judge of it so much by the relation it bears to us, or to our fellow creatures, as by its relation to God; for against *him* it is committed; and every sin strikes at God as much as if no other being was affected by it; and notwithstanding its fatal effects with regard to mankind we may say to God of every transgression, "against thee, thee only have I sinned and done this "evil in thy sight." Sin is enmity against God; against his attributes and his government. God never yet revealed a design which sin hath not withstood: nor given a law which sin has not trampled under foot. Sin deposes God from his sovereignty, abuses his goodness, abhors his holiness, vilifies his wisdom, insults and denies his omniscience, his justice and his power. And hence nothing is so offensive to God. It is called the *abominable thing which he hates.* And we read that he is *of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.* It is a metaphor taken from a person who has such a perfect abhorrence of a thing that he cannot bear the sight; the very thought of it shocks him. What can this be, concerning which Jehovah expresses himself thus strongly: he speaks so of nothing else in the universe. —And this is that which renders man, though the work of his hands, *filthy and abominable;* and constrains even *the God of love, the Father of mercies* to say concerning him, "the wicked shall not stand in my sight, I hate all "workers of iniquity!"

Behold sin in its names. For what term is there expressive of reproach or misery: what image is there that can produce aversion, or fear that is not employed by the scriptures to represent sin. Sin! it is disobedience, *it is* rebellion, it is treason, it is murder, *it is the works of the devil.* Sin! it is ignorance, it is folly, it

is madness. Sin! it is blindness, it is deafness, it is dumbness, it is sickness, it is poison, it is slavery, it is plague, it is death, it is hell. Now as it is said of Nabal, *as the name is, so is the man;* the same may be observed of sin, as the name is, so is the thing. Sin is not libelled by any of these dreadful representations: they are all given us by one who perfectly understands sin, and they fall infinitely short of the subject. For if we compare sin with other evils it will be found substantially to contain them all, and to be the cause of all. This is the fountain which has embittered all our streams, and the seed which has so thickly sown the world with wretchedness.

Behold therefore again the effects of sin. How different is man to what he was originally—but sin has made this change; sin has stripped him of his glory, and taken the crown from his head: *woe unto us that we have sinned.*

Observe the soul of man—It is sin that has debased it, defiled it, robbed it of the image, and banished it from the presence of God—it is this that has filled it with confusion, and regrets, it is this that has produced unruly passions, tormenting anxieties, a terrified conscience, a wounded spirit.

Take the body of man. This was once all immortal, without a defect, a disease, a danger. But *by sin death entered into the world*, and was crowned *king of terrors.* And now "man that is born of a woman is "of few days, and full of trouble." At his birth he enters a labyrinth of thorns and briars, and cannot move without *piercing himself through with many sorrows.* Even every comfort has its cross, and every blessing its curse. And how little of the misery of the world comes under our observation! O could we witness all the pains of the diseased at this moment: could we behold all the effects of war, pestilence and famine; could we see the bones of all the human race, from the death of Abel to this very hour piled into one immense

heap! O! what could we think of an enemy capable of producing such mischief as this?

Behold Adam and Eve expelled from Paradise. Behold the deluge sweeping away *the world of the ungodly*. Behold Sodom and Gomorrah "set forth as an "example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." See the plagues of Egypt, the destruction of the former inhabitants of Canaan, the dispersion, and misery of the Jews, a people once dear to God—in all these instances, the evil of sin is brought down to a level with our senses. And it is sin also that has reduced the material creation to vanity, and doomed it to a general conflagration. As under the law the very house of the leper was to be pulled down, so it is with regard to this world. You say can trees and valleys and hills and skies be criminal? No, but they have been the unconscious instruments of the sinner's guilt, they have been contaminated by his use, and the day of God cometh wherein "the heavens shall pass away with a "great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent "heat, the earth also, and all the works that are there-"in shall be burned up."

Thus far we have traced the effects of sin down through the history of *this* world. But there is another world that has been running parallel with this, and which will continue when this is no more. And here the consequences of sin most tremendously appear. Enter it and see. The first thing that strikes you is the fall of an innumerable multitude of superior beings hurled down from heaven—What roused the vengeance which pursues them with such severity; what is it that in a moment could transform angels into devils? A little of that envy, that pride, that independence of spirit which you think nothing of—"he spared not "the angels that SINNED, but cast them down to hell, "and delivered them into chains of darkness to be re-"served unto judgment."—And what place is that which you discern yonder, "the smoke of whose tor-"*ment ascendeth* up for ever and ever?" Sin built

hell; sin produced "the worm that never dies," and kindled "the fire that never shall be quenched." O could you lay down your ear and hear sin spoken of in its proper dialect by the old sons of perdition! What do you suppose Judas now says of betraying his master for thirty pieces of silver; Saul of persecuting David; Cain of killing his brother Abel!—But all this regards the present degree of their misery, not its future continuance.

Hence you must contemplate sin in the threatnings of the scripture. O! read and tremble. Read of "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, "and the glory of his power"—read of a doom which I hope you will never hear—"depart ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Now I reason thus, and a child can understand me—If God can righteously threaten all this misery, he can also righteously inflict it; and if he can righteously inflict such misery, sin must deserve it—and if sin deserves it—deserves *such punishment!*—O! my God, how is it possible for us to think too highly of its guilt!!

There is yet another way of judging of the evil of sin—and it is—by considering the means employed to remove it. Now there was only one Being in the universe equal to this work—the Lord of life and glory. By no other hand could this enemy fall; a thousand attempts had been made—but the victory was reserved for him.

And there are two things here worthy our remark; the first is, that he derives from this work his highest title; his name is the memorial of this atchievement; he will henceforth be known through all worlds as the conqueror of sin! And therefore we find, that though he is a Creator and a preserver, yet he is adored under the character of a saviour, by all the saints on earth, and by all the angels in heaven. "Worthy is the LAMB "THAT WAS SLAIN, to receive power, and riches, and "wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and bles-"*sing.*—*Unto him that loved us and* WASHED US FROM

" OUR SINS in his own blood, and hath made us kings " and priests unto God, be glory and dominion for ever " and ever, Amen." And the second is, that even in this glorious personage, who alone was adequate to the undertaking, it required something peculiar and extraordinary to accomplish it. He does not deliver a sinner as he performed his other works—in order to save, he must be humbled and exalted—he must descend from heaven to earth, and ascend from earth to heaven.

Let us enter into this, and II. Consider in what manner he saves his people from their sins. Now he accomplishes their deliverance by price—and thus he redeems; and by power—and thus he renews: in other words by his cross, and by his grace.

Yes, to save us he must suffer; by the shedding of his blood we are ransomed, and by his death we live. The case is this. Where the command of the law is broken, the curse of the law enters. Sin renders man obnoxious to punishment; and this punishment is as certain as the justice and the truth of God can make it. Now we had sinned, and therefore must have suffered —had not the Saviour become our surety, and our substitute. But he, standing in our place, became answerable for us: " he has redeemed us from the curse " of the law being made a curse for us." Thus it is said the Lord " laid on him the iniquity of us all." And how was it laid upon him—but by way of expiation? And for what purpose was it laid upon him—but that we might be released from a load which would have sunk us to the lowest hell? Hence it is said, " behold " the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the " world. Once in the end of the world hath he appear- " ed to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." In this sense he is so often said to *die for us*—not only for our good, but in our place, and as our victim. How else could he have fulfilled the types under the law. We are assured from the writings of the new testament, especially from the epistle to the Hebrews, that the daily and annual sacrifices offered by the Jews were typic-

al of Christ; but if they typified him at all, it must have been in his death; and if they typified any thing in his death, it must have been the atonement which it made. They could not typify in him, the death of a martyr, sealing his doctrine with his blood: nor the death of an example illustrating the virtues which he had taught—these views of his death are true as far as they go--but they do not go far enough to reach the main thing, the thing which God endeavoured from the foundation of the world to render prominent in his death, and which the church has so beautifully expressed in these words—" he was wounded for our trans-
" gressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chas-
" tisement of our peace was upon him; and with his
" stripes we are healed."

And thus it is that he saves us from the guilt of sin. But to take a full view of this part of the subject, it is necessary to observe that by his atonement he not only removes guilt from before God, but from off the mind. For it is here alone that we find effectual relief. That which appeases God's wrath, can alone appease the sinner's conscience. This blood which speaketh better things than that of Abel, addresses both God and the sinner—says to the one, " forbear to strike," and to the other, " be encouraged to hope"—and answers all that justice has to say in a way of claim, and unbelief in a way of objection. Thus by believing *we enter into rest.* Our fears and jealousies subside; we draw near to God with humble confidence, and feel " a peace which pas-
" seth all understanding."

But to know whether our relief be really peace, or nothing more than ease—it is necessary to consider not only how it is obtained, but by what it is accompanied. The peace he gives has purity with it, yea, purity in it. Those whom he redeems, he sanctifies, and those whom he pardons, he renews. And hence you read of our being " saved by the washing of regeneration, and
" the renewing of the Holy Ghost."

In attending to this process, let us remember, that he

always saves us from the *love* of sin. And here is the difference between moral reformation, and evangelical conversion. In the one sin is avoided, but in the other it is abhorred. For sin may be shunned where it is still loved, and the retreating sinner may look back like Lot's wife, and bewail the idols he has been forced to leave. Am I addressing none who know what it is to forsake sin, only from a regard to reputation, from the influence of connections, and the fear of consequences? Would you not rejoice if God would take off the restraint and allow you to live as you please? Would you not feel grateful towards him if he would permit you to live in sin, and not die in sorrow? Blessing him for the indulgence, would you not go forth free and easy, and say "well, no longer will I be detained from worldly dissipation—my heart has been always in it. No longer will I avoid slander—I always found it the salt which gave a relish to conversation. I will now grind the faces of the poor, and debase myself even to hell, to get wealth—I loved money equally well before; but it was dreadful to think that no covetous man, who is an idolator, should have any inheritance in the kingdom of God—but O delightful! I can be covetous now, and go to heaven too."

—Turn we to the christian. Of the Redeemer's subjects it is said, "thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power"—and among other things, they are willing to part with sin, with all sin, with even their dearest sins. His present hatred is greater than his former love. He now sees, not only what sin has cost him, but also what it cost the redeemer. "Can I ever call that sweet, which he found so bitter, or that light which he found so heavy? Can I ever be a friend to his enemy?—to a monster that killed him, who is all my salvation, and all my desire?" A christian may be surprised by sin, but he can never be reconciled to it. He has sworn eternal hatred against it, and he took the *oath under* the cross.

But is this all? Is he held in bondage by a tyrant

he detests? No. Jesus "opens the prison to them "that are bound. He saith to the prisoners, go forth. "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not un- "der the law but under grace." Thus sin is dethroned—not only in the heart, but also in the life. By the influence of his holy spirit he increasingly mortifies their corruptions, and enables them to "lay aside all "malice and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies and "evil speakings, and as new-born babes to desire the "sincere milk of the word, that we may grow thereby." The means of grace are now prized; and as they are used with a humble dependence, and a holy purpose, they are not used in vain. In waiting upon him their "strength is renewed; they mount up with wings as "eagles, they run and are not weary, and they walk and "are not faint." Losses and trials, and all the dispensations of providence are now also under a gracious agency, and made to "work together for their good."

But while the reign of sin is thus destroyed, the remains of it continue: and these are deplored and felt as the greatest distress of the christian's life—"O "wretched man that I am who shall deliver me from "the body of this death." In these circumstances, two things relieve his mind, and animate him in the warfare.—The one is, that his Saviour is "able to keep "him from falling;" and the other is, that "he will "present him faultless before the presence of his glory, "with exceeding joy." Then will he "shake himself "from *all* his dust," and "put on his beautiful garments" of complete holiness. What a blissful change! When he examines himself, he can find *no* ignorance, *no* pride, *no* unbelief, *no* weakness—he is become a part of "a "glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any "such thing!"

But this respects only the soul—yonder still lies the poor body. Death is the consequence of sin, and while the body is in the grave, the believer is not saved from all the natural effects of sin. But Jesus comes, "the "*resurrection* and the life. He will change this vile

" body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious " body, according to the working whereby he is able, " even to subdue all things unto himself."

Behold the work of the Saviour perfectly accomplished, and the deliverance of his people absolutely complete. Behold him " delivering up the kingdom to " God, even the Father," and hear him saying, " all " these I engaged to save from their sins; and—there " they all are, and—there they all are sinless."

To conclude, let us observe, I. If his name be called Jesus, because he shall save his people from their sins—how awfully deceived are those who hope to be saved in them. And yet, a degree of this confidence too commonly prevails. There are few indeed but entertain some expectation of going to heaven when they die, however unholy they may live. Hence though conscious that they love sin, and indulge themselves in the practice of it, they feel nothing like despair or distress. But upon what principle is your hope founded? Did you never read that " without holiness no man shall " see the Lord? Know ye not that the unrighteous " shall not inherit the kingdom of God?" Did the Saviour come to give you a licence to sin with impunity? His coming was designed to make sin appear *exceeding sinful:* his aim as you have heard, was to save us from it. " He gave himself for us, that he " might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto " himself a peculiar people zealous of good works. " For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that " he might destroy the works of the devil." And what notion have you of salvation, unaccompanied with a deliverance from sin? This is like saving a man from drowning, by keeping him under the water which is destroying him: or like recovering a man from sickness by leaving him under the malady which constitutes the complaint. Were it possible for you to be pardoned and not sanctified, you could enjoy no communion with God, and God could derive no service from you: you *would remain* strangers to peace and pleasure; and the

cause of your misery would be left behind. Sin and sorrow are inseparable. God himself cannot separate them: he can only destroy the one by removing the other. He makes men happy by making them holy—there *can* be no other method.

Besides these thoughtless creatures which I have mentioned, there are some who are more systematically wrong with regard to this subject. They profess to glory in the cross, but they will have nothing to do with the sceptre. The righteousness of Christ is their darling theme, but they mean by it, a fine robe to cover a filthy back. They are fond of the assurance of faith, but they intend by it, a speculative persuasion of their safety, underived from, and unconnected with any gracious operations and qualities as evidences. They consider it as a species of unbelief, even to question their being the people of God, but they retain the love of the world in their hearts, and discover the same unsubdued tempers as others. They think it would be wrong to allow sin either to distress or alarm *them*—sin cannot hurt a believer—indeed sin has not the same evil when found in them, as when found in others: "he hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he "seen perverseness in Israel." This error does not like many others, arise from mere ignorance. And therefore the apostle Jude calls those who hold it "ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lasciviousness." And they would do well to remember that another apostle says, that *the wrath* of God is revealed from heaven, against *all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.* And that the Saviour himself says, "But these mine enemies that would not that I "should reign over them, bring hither and slay them "before me." The character here given of the Lord's people is, that they are saved from their sins. And this is what every truly awakened soul desires.

Therefore II. Here is relief and consolation for those who are sensible of the evil of sin, and are asking, *what must I do to be saved?* Though deliverance

pears so unspeakably desirable, you feel that you are wholly unable to accomplish it yourselves. Nothing in your sufferings, or doings can wash away the pollution or subdue the influence of sin. But such despair as this makes way for the hope of the gospel. The convictions which you feel so painful and alarming, are necessary to enable you to perceive the meaning, and to feel the importance of this glorious dispensation. And these also prepare you to welcome the approach of such a peculiar Saviour. So that to you it is not only "a faithful "saying but worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ "is come into the world to save sinners." Open then your hearts and let me pour into them the delightful message—"Unto you is born this day in the city of Da-"vid, a Saviour which is Christ the Lord! He is come "to seek and to save that which was lost. He has come "that you might have life and that you might have "more abundantly. The sun of righteousness is aris-"en with healing under his wings." Endeavour to exercise faith upon him. Believe that in him there is plenteous redemption, and that he is now asking, "wilt "thou be made whole?

Let not the nature, or the number of your transgressions keep you from him—what is he come for—but to save us from our sins? If you do not think yourselves too good, he does not think you too bad to be saved by him. Throw yourselves at his feet and beg him to undertake a very pressing case—"save me and I shall be "saved; heal me and I shall be healed, for thou art my "praise."

Finally, what should be the feelings of those who are already saved by him?—To you all this is more than speculation; it is experience. You were once "in the "bondage of corruption, but the Son has made you free "and you are free indeed." Not that you are freed from all service and obedience—but you now obey and serve a master whose "yoke is easy and whose burden "*is light.*" From such an obligation you do not wish to *be delivered.* You can never forget what great things

he has done for you. You acknowledge his goodnes in saving you from indigence, from accidents, from dis eases, from "wicked and unreasonable men—but abov "all you bless him for turning you away from your ini "quities."

Thus delivered out of the hand of your enemies, se that you "serve him without fear, in holiness and righ "eousness before him, all the days of your life." (feel your engagements to him. Let the impressions c gratitude become every day more powerful. And to wondering, or a despising world, say with the apostl "the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thu "judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead : an "that he died for all, that they which live should no "henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him whicl "died for them, and rose again."

DISCOURSE XXIV.

THE UNION OF PRAYER AND WATCHFULNESS.

Nevertheless, we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night.—Nehemiah iv. 9.

IN this mode of defence we have an example worthy of our imitation. It is equally expressive of piety and prudence; of dependence upon God, and the use of means.

And such a union as this is equally pleasing and useful. It forms the man, and the christian. It blends duty and privilege together. It keeps our devotion from growing up into rank enthusiasm; and our diligence from sinking into the wisdom of the world, which is foolishness with God.

Let us not imagine that the force of this example is inapplicable to us. What did our Saviour say to his disciples in the garden? WATCH and PRAY, *lest ye enter into temptation*—the very thing here exemplified by Nehemiah and his brethren: "nevertheless, we made "our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them "day and night." Besides; one of the most common and striking images by which the life of the christian is held forth, is that of a warfare. A warfare we find it to be—"without are fightings, and within are fears." Like this good man, we also are opposed by various classes of enemies who labour to hinder our work, and are always endeavouring to get an advantage over us. What *then* can be more reasonable than to betake ourselves to "*prayer*—and vigilance?"

I. Let us "make our prayer to God." On him let us place our reliance; and bring all our perplexities, afflictions, and wants, and spread them before his throne. Nothing can be done without prayer.

Prayer is recommended by God himself.—"Call up-"on me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee, "and thou shalt glorify me."

The very exercise of prayer is useful. It calms the mind; it drives back our fears; it strengthens the weak hands, and confirms the feeble knees.

Prayer—is forming a confederacy with God and bringing down the Almighty to our assistance, and

"Satan trembles when he sees
"The weakest saint upon his knees."

He knows that he cannot contend with omnipotence—but he will never be afraid to meet you alone, however you may be armed; he will never be afraid to engage you in the field if he can keep you out of the closet. This then is our wisest course, because it is our safest—not to encounter the enemy single handed, but when we are in danger of any sin, feel any rising passion, or perceive any approaching temptation—to say—"O Lord, I "beseech thee deliver my soul. Here is a foe, and I "feel my weakness, and my ignorance—O come to "my succour; inspire me with strength; teach my "hands to war, and my fingers to fight. O Lord, hast "thee to help me."

For let us remember that every thing is under his controul, and according as we please or offend him; according as he interposes in our favor, or refuses his aid—we fail or prosper. "Except the Lord build the "house, they labor in vain that build it. Except the "Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in "vain."—

Does a nation dispense with God, and place their proud dependence on natural and acquired resources? He can "lead away their councellors, spoiled and make

" their judges fools." He speaks; and the tempest roars—and a navy sinks in " the mighty waters." He sends sickness; a general is laid by—and his absence occasions the destruction of a whole army, and the devastation of a whole country.—

Does a man in trade dispense with God, and rely upon the wisdom of his own understanding, the power of his own arm, or the claim he has on the friendship of others?—How easily can God convince him of his dependence upon providence? He can touch an invisible spring and a thousand occurrences are in motion: the man wonders to find his plans crossed, his hopes disappointed. It matters not what he gets—he gets nothing: " ye have sown much, and bring in little: ye eat, but " ye have not enough: ye drink, but ye are not filled " with drink: ye clothe you, but there is none warm; " and he that earneth wages, earneth wages to put it in- " to a bag with holes," Or he may succeed—but his prosperity will destroy him. The God he disregards stands by, and as he drinks the poison, says *let him alone.* He *would* be rich without consulting God—and he is rich and falls " into temptation, and a snare, and into " many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in " destruction and perdition."

Surely a christian does not think of going on without God? generally, and habitually he does not. *Without me*, says the Saviour, *ye can do nothing;* and the believer is convinced of this—but not so much as he ought to be: and sometimes he seems entirely to forget the conviction. Let us take an instance. When our Lord fore-warned Peter of his danger; Peter deemed the pre-monition needless—" Though all men should be " offended because of thee, yet will I never be offend- " ed; though I should die with thee, yet will I not de- " ny." And he was sincere—but though warm, he was not wise: he was not aware of his own weakness: he did not consider how differently he would feel in new circumstances—he did not apprehend that a little *curiosity would* bring him into company, and company

into danger; and that the impertinence of a maid-servant would induce him to "curse and to swear, saying, "I know not the man." Had he prayed where he presumed——had he said, "Lord, thou knowest all "things; thou knowest my frame, and rememberest "that I am dust; I bless thee for the merciful cau-"tion; *hold thou me up and I shall be safe*"—he would have triumphed where he fell: and have been—not an instance of the weakness of human nature, but of the power of divine grace. Let his injury prove our security. "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed, "lest he fall.—Trust in the Lord with all thy heart, and "lean not unto thine own understanding: in all thy "ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, "that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in "time of need.

But what is the dependence upon God which we recommend?—It is wise, it is cautious, it is active. And if vigilance be nothing without prayer, prayer is nothing without vigilance. We must therefore,

II. "Set a watch because of our enemies, night and "day." I am very sorry to say, that this is not so much attended to, as it ought to be. For the help God affords, is not designed to favor indolence—but to encourage exertion; and in his wisdom he has connected the means and the end together: and therefore to expect the end, without the use of the means, is nothing but presumption.

If people would exercise the same common sense in religion which they discover in the ordinary affairs of life, it would save them from a thousand mistakes. Behold the husbandman. He knows that God gives the increase—but he also knows *how* he gives it—and therefore manures, and ploughs, and sows, and weeds. His reliance upon God tells him that favorable seasons and influences are necessary to raise and ripen the corn—but he is never guilty of such folly as to go forth at harvest, and expect to reap where he has not

sown. Nevertheless, such is the folly of many with regard to religious things. Such is the folly of a man who complains he does not profit by the word—but never tries to impress his mind with the importance of the duty in which he is going to engage, never hears with attention and application; never retires to review what he has heard, and to make it his own. Does the word of God operate like a charm—so that it is equally the same whether a man be awake or asleep?—Such is the folly of a man who complains that his children are not religious, when he knows that he never trained them up in the way that they should go; never prayed with them; never instructed them early in the principles of the gospel; never placed before them a good example in his own temper and life.—Such is the folly of those heads of families, who complain of servants—not considering that kind affections, expressions, and actions, can only be returned where they are received—that a harsh, unfeeling, tyrannical master; that a haughty, niggardly, scolding mistress—can never be served by cordial attention, and cheerful obedience. By failing in their duty to their dependents, they set the consciences of their dependents easy in the breach of duty to them.—A poor man may talk of casting all his care upon God, and sing Jehovah jireh—*the Lord will provide* as long as he pleases; but if he becomes idle, wandering about from house to house; if he omits opportunity of exertion, and lives beyond his expected income—let such a man remember that he tempts God, but does not trust him: that he may pray without ceasing, but that an inspired apostle says, "if "any man also will not work, neither shall he eat."—God knows our dispositions, and hence he is prepared to advise us—and he has commanded us "not to be "unequally yoked together with unbelievers." If we disregard this admonition, and form irreligious alliances—all the devotion in the world will never remedy the mischief or the misery.

He then who, while he lives carelessly, and indiffer-

ently, hopes to be delivered from evil, merely by praye
is only *sporting himself with his own deceivings.* H
who enjoined prayer, never intended to make it th
sacrifice of fools. Prayer when unaccompanied by
corresponding course of action is a trifling with God
and prayer when contradicted by our practice, is an ir
sulting of God to his face.

And therefore, not only be prayerful, but *sober an*
vigilant. And to enable you *to set a watch* successfu
ly—take the following directions

First. Impress your minds with a sense of you
danger. The evil which lurks under every temptatio
is inexpressible. The design of it is to make you *sin*
and to *sin*, is to debase your nature, to defile your co
science, to rob yourselves of peace and reputation, an
to destroy *both body and soul in hell.* I know there is
deceitfulness in sin ; and that the enemy endeavors t
represent it as liberty, and pleasure ; or if an evil at al
as a trifling one. But take your estimate of all sin fro
the scripture, from the Judge himself, who is to pun
ish it—and you will find that it is *exceeding sinful*, an
that its history is like Ezekiel's roll, " written withi
" and without, with lamentation, and mourning, an
" woe."

Think of this—and common sense being your cou
sellor, you will *watch ;* you will be willing to make an
sacrifices, any efforts, rather than lie down in everlas
ing shame and sorrow. " If I conquer—I gain endle
" honor and happiness. If I am overcome—I am u
" done for ever. And O, my soul, is there no dang
" of this ? Are there not temptations in every situ
" tion ; in my business, in my food ; in my dress
" Have I not a wise and a powerful adversary, wh
" goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he ma
" devour ? And is there not a subtle party withi
" carrying on a traiterous correspondence with th
" world, and the devil without ?—O my soul, awak
" and watch."

Secondly. Study your constitutional weakness a

failings. Endeavor to know *what manner of spirit you are of.* Some are more inclined naturally to sloth; others to anger and impatience. Some to pride and vanity: others to wantonness, and the pleasures of sense. There is a *sin that most easily besets us;* and this demands our peculiar circumspection and care.

Thirdly. Observe, how you have already been foiled, or ensnared. He who would encounter an enemy successfully, should be informed of his mode of fighting—and how is this to be done, but by observation and reflection. "How was such a place taken? "How did I lose such a battle? What rendered the "last campaign so little efficient?—Let me look back "upon my past life; and endeavor to derive wisdom "from my old follies, and strength from my falls. By "what secret avenue did sin enter? Have I not been "taken by surprise, where I deemed myself most se- "cure? And may not this be the case again? Are "there not some places and companies from which I "never returned without injury? Shall I turn again "to folly? Let painful experience awaken me--and "keep me awake."

Thirdly. Guard against the beginnings of sin. You should learn, even from an enemy; and take the same course to preserve yourselves, as the devil does to destroy you. Now the tempter never begins where he intends to leave off. Would he induce a man to impurity? He does not propose the crime at once—but prepares for it by degrees, by the cherishing of loose thoughts, by the indulging of improper familiarities, by the courting of favorable opportunities. If he would produce infidelity—he first reconciles the youth to read poisonous books, perhaps for the sake of the style, or some curious subject; he draws him into the company of those who entertain loose notions of religion, and ridicule *some* of its doctrines and institutions; from these he joins the sceptic; and he prepares him for the scoffer. Guard therefore against the first deviations from the path of righteousness. Crush the

cockatrice in the egg ; or it will grow up into a frightful serpent. Cut off the shoots of iniquity, yea nip the very buds ; it will otherwise *bring forth fruit unto death.*

Finally, avoid the occasions of sin. Nothing is more dangerous than idleness, or having nothing to do. Our idle days, says Henry, are the devil's busy ones. And says another, when the mind is full, temptation cannot enter, but when it is empty and open, the enemy can throw in what he pleases. Stagnant waters breed thousands of noxious insects ; but this is not the case with living water.

A prudent man looketh well to his going, and will think it at any time worth while to go round, in order to avoid a pit. "Remove thy way far from her, and "come not nigh the door of her house"—lest by going nigh, you should be tempted to go in. "Can a man "take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burnt? "Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burnt?" Can a man wish the weeds in his garden to wither, and daily water them? If a man prayed to be heavenly minded, would he go and wait in a theatre for the answer?

Sometimes christians are called into places and circumstances, in the discharge of their duty, that are very trying ; when this is the case, the business is the Lord's and he will take care of the servant employed in it : and therefore, in such instances, we have seen the weakest believers preserved. But it is otherwise when you rush into such dangers, uncalled of God. Is God bound to work miracles as often as you chuse to play the fool, or to act the sinner? Are you justified in bringing yourselves into a situation where the alternative is either a supernatural deliverance, or a shameful fall?

Thus then let us make our prayer to God, and set a watch. Let us impress our minds with a sense of our danger—let us study our natural dispositions—let us remark in what manner we have been injured already—*let us guard* against the beginnings—and shun all the

occasions of sin. Thus shall we "stand in the evil day," "and having done all stand." Yea, in all these things, "we shall be more than conquerors through him that "loved."

Nor shall we always be in a state of warfare. We shall soon exchange the toil of the soldier, for "the rest that "remains for the people of God." Our praying and our watching will soon be needless. We shall put off the helmet, and put on the crown. "Sing, O daugh-"ter of Zion: shout O Israel: be glad and rejoice "with all thy heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The "Lord hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast "out thine enemy: the King of Israel, even the Lord "is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any "more."

DISCOURSE XXV.

THE TREE OF LIFE.

In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bear twelve manner of fruits and yielded her fruit every month : and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.—Revelations xxii. 2.

—YEA "doubtless and I count all things but loss for "the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my "Lord." Such was the exclamation of the apostle; such was the judgment he formed of an acquaintance with the Saviour of sinners. He saw an excellency in it that led him to undervalue, and even despise every thing else. And no wonder—

What can be so suitable; so necessary—to creatures in our circumstances, as the knowledge of the Lord Jesus? If we are exposed—he is our refuge. If we are wanderers—he is our guide. If we are poor —he is rich. If we are nothing, he "is all, and in all."

The christian, feeling his necessities, and enlightened from above to know the source of his supplies, often exclaims, as he reads through this sacred volume, "we "have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the "prophets did write; whom David, Joseph, Isaac, pre-"figured; who realizes in his own character, the tem-"ple, the altar, the paschal lamb, the ark." He holds communion with him as the "rock of ages, as the sun "of righteousness, as the fountain of living waters, as "—the tree of life, in the midst of the paradise of "God."

—*Of this* we have a striking representation

words before us. John saw the new Jerusalem descending from heaven. It was a city four-square. The gates, the walls, the very foundations were of precious stones. The pavement was of gold, and what we adore, they trample upon. Thus far the allusion is taken from the world of art—but nature also lends her combined aid—and here is a reference to Eden, the original residence of man. In this residence it is well known man drank pure water, and lived on fruit: accordingly a fine river watered the garden, and a tree called "the tree of life" grew in the center. Hence the water of life, and the tree of life stand significantly for all the supplies of the spiritual life: and here we have both. "And he shewed me a pure river of "water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the "throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the "street of it, and on either side of the river, was there "the tree of life, which bear twelve manner of fruits, "and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of "the tree were for the healing of the nations."

It will be necessary to premise, that the tree of life which John saw, was not a *single* tree—for then how could it grow on both sides of the river: but intends a *species* of tree, or many trees of one kind. There is nothing forced or unusual in this language. We should be easily understood were we to say, the cedar-tree grows on both sides of Lebanon; or the apple-tree flourishes best in such a soil: and we should be understood to mean—not an individual tree, but the kind of tree. And this is confirmed by a parallel passage, taken from the visions of Ezekiel. "And by the river upon "the bank thereof on this side and on that side shall "grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, nei- "ther shall the fruit thereof be consumed; it shall "bring forth new fruit according to his months, because "their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the "fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for "*medicine.*" Upon the same principle, it is not necessary to suppose the tree of life in Eden was a single

tree; it was more probably a number of trees of the same species finely arranged, and bearing in abundance. This conjecture has to plead not only probability but authority. The learned Doctor Kennicot has defended this opinion.

But however this may be—whatever the tree of life was to man in his innocency, Christ is to man in his fallen estate: what that was to Adam under a covenant of works, Christ is to man under a covenant of grace. That insured life to obedience, and he insures life to faith, according to his own declaration, "God so loved "the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that "whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have "everlasting life." This is the new and living way opened in the gospel, and by which we can alone pass to a happy immortality.

Whether the tree of life in paradise was more than sacramental, affording a pledge of the continuance of life, while man remained in a state of obedience—or whether in addition to this, it had an innate virtue to perpetuate the immortality of those who partook of it—we cannot absolutely determine. The latter has been deemed probable by many, from the words of Moses. "And the Lord God said, behold, the man is become "as one of us, to know good and evil: and now lest he "put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and "eat, and live for ever; therefore the Lord God sent "him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground "from whence he was taken. So he drove out the "man: and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden, "Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every "way to keep the way of the tree of life." But we are sure that Jesus Christ has not only procured for us a title to endless life, but actually communicates life to all those who believe in him. "God hath given to us "eternal life, and this life is in his Son: and therefore it can only be derived from him. And as what we live *upon is* previously destroyed, so that we literally live *by death*—the death of fruits, and vegetables, and an

mals—so by his death we live. It is his own declaration, though it may prove as offensive to some who read it, as it did to those who originally heard it. "Then "Jesus said unto them, verily, verily, I say unto you, "except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink "his blood, ye have no life in you: for my flesh is meat "indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eat-"eth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, "and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, "and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even "he shall live by me."

And therefore, we cannot be made *partakers of Christ* without resembling him. We cannot receive a life-giving Saviour, and remain dead in trespasses and sins. If joined to him we shall be quickened by him and walk *in newness of life*. And it is owing to the little communion we have with him, that our religion is so languishing, and that there are so many *things in us that are ready to die*: for he came not only *that we might have life*, but *that we might have it more abundantly*.

The *situation* of this tree is worthy of our attention. Endeavor to apprehend the scenery, as it appeared to the eye of John. The river softly rolled down the middle of the street, and thus formed a street on each side of it—and in the midst of each street, in a beautiful row, grew the tree of life. So that the inhabitants could walk between the houses and the trees, and between the trees and the river, on each side. It was therefore not concealed, but obviously seen; it every where met the eye, and tempted the hand. Nor was it confined, but easy of access to all who passed along, and to persons on either side of the river—"In the "midst of the street of the city, and on either side of "the river was there the tree of life."

And "the righteousness of faith speaketh on this "wise, say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into "*heaven*? (that is, to bring Christ down from above;) "*or, who shall* descend into the deep: (that is, to bring "*up Christ a*[illegible]*rom the dead.*) But what saith it?

"the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy "heart: that is, the word of faith which we preach: "that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord "Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath "raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Is Christ hidden? Exposing himself to view, in every direction, he "cries, behold me, behold me. Look "unto me, and be ye saved all the ends of the earth, "for I am God, and there is none else. Come unto "me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will "give rest."

Is he secluded from approach, and from participation? Few, comparatively, will partake of him—but he has told us the reason: "ye will not come to me, "that ye might have life." Otherwise, none are forbidden: for "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is "neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor fe-"male, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus: for the same "Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him." Is he a fountain? he is a fountain opened. Was he represented by the manna? this fell all around the camp, and all were equally welcome to go and gather it up. Was he held forth by the brazen serpent? this was suspended upon a pole, fixed in the center of the camp, and it was announced, that every one that was bitten when he looked upon it, should live. Was he typified by the cities of refuge? there were six of these at certain distances from each other—that in what part soever of the country the man-slayer lived, he might soon reach a place of safety. They were situated on high hills, or on extensive plains—that the avenger of blood might not overtake them, while losing time in searching for it. The roads leading to them were fifty-eight feet four inches wide, and well repaired—that nothing should hinder their progress, or stop them for a moment. Where rivers would have checked their course, bridges were thrown over: and where cross-ways would have perplexed their minds, directing posts were fixed with their extended arms pointing and cry

ing REFUGE, REFUGE!—The application of all this is easy—O think of it—ye who are disposed to flee for refuge to the hope set before you. Here is strong consolation—and spiritual distress requires it.

Behold further, the *fertility* of this tree. Now first, it is said that it bear *twelve manner of fruits*. Other trees yield only after their kind. To a vine we go for grapes, to a fig-tree, for figs; and so of the rest. But suppose a tree that should bear both these, and ten more sorts of the most delicious fruit! would it not excite your curiosity? would you not even go far, only to see this wonder of nature?

"Turn your eyes towards me," says the Saviour—"I am all this. I am the child born, and the everlasting Father. I am the root and the offspring of David. I am alpha and omega, the beginning and the ending. I am he that liveth and was dead. I am the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, and the lion of the tribe of Judah. Such a combination of perfections and blessings, O man, did thy salvation require. Though all thy miseries flow from one cause—sin; thy wants are various, and demand various relief. You are enslaved and need redemption—and I give my life a ransom for sinners. You are guilty and need justification—and my blood cleanseth from all sin. You are unholy and need sanctifying grace—and a new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you. You are weak—but my strength shall be made perfect in weakness. You have tribulation in the world—but in me you shall have peace."—Thus God "supplies all our need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Thus we are blessed with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places in Christ."

Secondly, the produce is not only abundant but continual: it yielded her fruit *every month*. This is not the case with our trees. They bear only once a year. *And hence our* spring is so important—we go out and *anxiously look* for the buds and blossoms; and if we

find none, our hope is cut off, and for twelve long months we impatiently wait for the return of the season. But this tree bears always—in winter, as well as in summer—perhaps he bears most in winter, or at least more is then gathered than at any other time. Our external troubles, and our internal distresses endear him, and urge us to make a more earnest application to him. But the apostle tells us, that he found him answerable to all his varying conditions: "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know "both how to be abased, and how to abound: every "where and in all things I am instructed both to be full "and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need: "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth "me." If we prosper, he can keep us. If we fall into adversity—he can sustain us. He can bless you in social scenes; and also in solitary seasons. Joseph enjoyed him in the prison, and Daniel in the lion's den, and John in his banishment. And when nothing else looks green and fair—he affords succour and supplies; and therefore says the christian, whose faith and hope are fixed on him; "although the fig-tree shall "not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the "labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield "no meat; the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, "and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will re"joice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salva"tion." Hence, in a case more distressing to a good man than any other; I mean when his family yields him no comfort, bears nothing, yea discovers no marks of spiritual life—he can pluck something from this tree which is always bending with fruit: "Although "my house be not so with God; yet he hath made "with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things "and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my de"sire, although he make it not to grow." And when we are taking a farewel of life, and all the powers of solemn nature fail—he is the strength of our heart, and *our portion* for ever—And hence the same tried and

triumphant believer exclaims, "yea, though I walk "through the valley of the shadow of death, I will "fear no evil; for thou art with me: thy rod and thy "staff they comfort me."

When our Saviour, as he came from Bethany, hungered, he saw a fig-tree, and went up to it, hoping to find fruit thereon, and found none, *for the time of figs was not yet.* But he himself will never occasion such a disappointment in those who apply to him: come when we will—it is always the time of fruit. The tree bears *every month.* Ye young; you cannot come too soon. Ye aged; you cannot come too late. It is necessary however to observe that this is true only of the time of your continuance in this world. If you drop through life destitute of the blessings of his salvation your opportunity is over, and will never return. You are therefore admonished to "seek ye the Lord "while he may be found, and to call upon him while "he is near." Behold, now is the accepted time: be- "hold, now is the day of salvation."

Observe finally what is said of the leaves of this tree —they *are for the healing of the nations.* Other trees have leaves, and they are by no means useless. Not only do they add to the appearance and beauty of the tree—for how would a tree look without them?—but they serve to screen the new born naked bud from the cold by night, and the excessive heat by day; they catch the dew and the rain; retain and guide the moisture; and thus they aid the preservation and growth of the fruit. The leaves of a tree afford a comfortable shade to those, who not only wish to partake of its produce, but want also to stand out of the sun—the church therefore says, "I sat down under his shadow with "great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste." Leaves, especially in the earlier ages of the world, were frequently applied to wounds, and many of them are to this day reckoned medicinal.

What then are the leaves of this tree, here distinguished from the fruit—but the institutions of religion,

the ordinances of the gospel, which we commonly and properly call the means of grace. These derive their being and their efficacy from him, as leaves from a tree. In the use of these he has promised his blessing, and by the application of them, he *brings us health and cure.* What are our sabbaths? what are our sanctuaries? what are the ministers of the word? what is this book—what are the leaves of this book—but "the leaves of "this tree which are for the healing of the nations?"

When we are perfectly recovered, and removed to that country, "where the inhabitants shall no more say I am sick," these means and ordinances becoming unnecessary will be laid aside. There will be no more prayer, no more sermons, no more bread and wine, the emblems and memorials of a Saviour's death. The end of all will be fully accomplished in our happy experience.

In the mean time they are of unspeakable importance, and we should be careful to shew our regard for them two ways.

I. By being thankful that we are indulged with the means of grace *ourselves.* Let us hear what the saints of old said, who lived under a dispensation far inferior to ours. "How enviable are thy tabernacles, O Lord "of Hosts.—Blessed are they that dwell in thy house; "they will be still praising thee. Blessed is the man "whom thou choosest and causest to approach unto "thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be "satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy "holy temple." As soon as ever our ministers end their discourses, we should remember the words of our Lord. "Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and "your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, "that many prophets and righteous men have desired "to see those things which ye see, and have not seen "them: and to hear those things which ye hear, and "have not heard them." Not only are these means instrumental in awakening us at first, but they are useful to revive, to refresh us; to strengthen our weak *hands,* and confirm our feeble knees, all through life.

of his grief, cursed the day of his birth—but he is proposed only as an example of patience; "ye have heard "of the patience of Job." Notwithstanding the imperfections remarked in the seven churches of Asia—they are still called the seven *golden candlesticks.*

Secondly, God remembers the past. Our memories soon fail us. How little can we now re-trace of all the busy concerns in which we have been engaged. How few of our actions, and how much fewer of our words, and of our thoughts are we able to recover from the oblivion of time! But all of them are with God. Old impressions soon give place to new ones, and we often find it difficult to recal without assistance an occurrence that happened a few months, or a few weeks ago. "But "a thousand years are in his sight but as yesterday, "when it is past, and as a watch in the night."

As he observes every thing, so he retains it; and what with you—is past, with him is—present. It was a persuasion of this that led David to pray, "remem- "ber not against me the sins of my youth." For he can easily shew us that he remembers them. He can write bitter things against us, "and make us possess "the iniquities of our youth." He can bring back old sins by afflictions; and he can bring back old sins by convictions. He can tell us all things that ever we did. Transgressions committed forty years back he can revive, even in their aggravations and circumstances, with all the freshness of recent guilt. And it is well to be convinced of this truth, in a way of mercy, and while we can apply for pardon. For he will certainly convince every impenitent sinner of it hereafter, in a way of justice, when he will publish to the world all the private wickedness of his heart and life, and fill him *with shame, and everlasting contempt.*

Thirdly, It is well to be informed of what we once were, and to be led back to our former history and experience. It is useful for a preacher sometimes to cry *in our ears,* and remind us of our natural state; that; *we may look to* the rock whence we were hewn, and to

the hole of the pit whence we were digged.—It is needful for him to remind us of the dispensations of Providence which have attended us in former years.

> " Why should the wonders he has wrought
> " Be lost in silence and forgot !"

It is well for us to raise our Ebenezers, and to inscribe upon them " hitherto hath the Lord helped me." Such " memorials God himself prescribes. " O my people, " remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted, " and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from " Shittim, unto Gilgal; that ye may know the right- " eousness of the Lord. And thou shalt remember all " the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty " years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove " thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou " wouldest keep his commandments or no."—It is desireable to bring back to the mind our former frames and feelings in religion. We need every thing that is favorable to self-examination and self-knowledge. We ought to be able to judge of our progress or of our declensions in the divine life. The state of our souls in particular circumstances and seasons should be secured, that after the lapse of years it may be reviewed. A comparison of our present, with our former experiences, will in some instances encourage; and in more condemn.

But we need reproof. It will be profitable for us " to afflict our souls. The sacrifices of God are a bro- " ken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O God thou " wilt not despise."

This brings us, II. to consider these words as applicable to characters. And first, they will apply to christians under declensions in religion. It is said of Jehosophat——that he walked " in the first ways of David " his father." This is an intimation that his first ways were his best; and that the king never equalled the *shepherd.* This is awful—but the case is not peculiar.

to him. Backsliding is no uncommon thing. For it should be remembered that where there are no gross and scandalous deviations from the path of duty, there may be many secret alienations of heart from God: and where iniquity does not abound, the love of many may wax cold.—Let us imagine the Supreme Being by his ministers addressing such characters as these.—

I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth—I remember thy simplicity. You had no double views and aims then. One motive influenced and decided you. If God was pleased and glorified, and you could enjoy his smiles and his presence—it was enough; and the applause or censure of worms was less than nothing and vanity. You rejoice that you were "counted worthy "to suffer shame for his name," and binding the reproach of the cross as an ornament upon your brow, you said, "if this be to be vile, I will yet be more vile." One thing you desired of the Lord, and that you sought after—it was a participation of the portion of his saints; therefore regardless of all other things, you prayed "remember me, O Lord, with the favor thou bearest "unto thy people, O visit me with thy salvation; that "I may see the good of thy chosen; that I may re-"joice in the gladness of thy nation; and glory with "thine inheritance." You did not think of stipulating for any thing else—with this, having only food and raiment, you could learn to be content. But alas! since this period, how often have you looked aside, after the friendship of the world; how often have you yielded a little of your firmness to avoid the reproach of the cross? It is not sufficient for you now to have God for your portion—you are miserable unless you are in a fair way of adding house to house, and joining field to field. A little disappointment in worldly things fills you with fretfulness and despondency—as if all was gone or going—and like Jonah you sometimes exclaim, when a gourd withers, "I do well to be angry even un-"*to death.*"

—*I remember* thy attachment to the means of grace.

O how you loved his word: it was your meditation all the day!—How welcome was the preaching of the gospel! Then a trifling indisposition; a little rain or cold; the unseasonable calling of a friend—did not keep you from the courts of the Lord—nor did you hear half-asleep.—How you prized the sabbath, how you numbered the intervening hours that should draw it on: how you hailed it when it arrived; "this is the day "which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be "glad in it!" And O, how precious were those seasons in which around the table of a crucified Saviour, you received the dear memorials of his dying love: in the reception you said—"his flesh is meat indeed! "and his blood is drink indeed! and in the reflection "—I sat down under his shadow with great delight, "and his fruit was sweet to my taste!" Then christians appeared like angels; how attractive, how edifying was the communion of saints! If two of you walked towards Emmaus, you took sorrowful and sweet council together; the Redeemer was your theme and your companion: and when you came to the village whither you went, you said one to another, "did not "our heart burn within us while he talked to us by the "way, and opened to us the scripture!" And when alone, was not your meditation of him sweet, and therefore frequent? Could you not say with David, "how "precious are thy thoughts unto me, O Lord, how "great is the sum of them, if I should count them, they "are more in number than the sand, when I awake I "I am still with thee?"—

I remember thy holy and active zeal:——how you abounded in the duties of obedience——how you daily asked "Lord what wilt thou have me to do?"——How dissatisfied you were in the service of God, unless you could *draw near even to his seat*——how the bitterness of repentance made you loathe sin—at what an awful distance you kept yourselves from its approach—how you shunned *the very appearance of evil*—how, when *the name* of God was blasphemed, you could not sit

" like a man in whose mouth there are no reproofs ;" but spoke for God ; and defended his cause—how *jealous* you were *for the Lord of hosts*—how your bowels yearned over poor perishing sinners ; how you longed to teach transgressors the way in which you were walking ; how you seized every opportunity to invite others to taste and see that the Lord is good——how to relations, friends, neighbours, you said " come with us, " and we will do thee good, for the Lord hath spoken " good concerning Israel !"—I need not proceed. Such is the change.—

And has God deserved it? Have you gained by these declensions from him? Have you not compelled him to say, " have I been a wilderness unto Israel, a " land of darkness? O that they had hearkened to my " commandments ! then had their peace been as a riv- " er, and their righteousness like the waves of the sea?"

How dreadful is it that when every thing requires our advancement, we should be stationary ! that when means and ordinances, mercies and trials, unite to urge us forward ; that when our obligations to God are daily increasing, and the day of account every hour approaching—that we should not only stand still—but even draw back !"

Surely it is high time to awake out of sleep ! Declining christian ! attend to the admonitions given to the declining churches : " nevertheless I have somewhat " against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. " Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and " repent, and do the first works ; or else I will come " unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick " out of his place, except thou repent. Be watchful, " and strengthen the things which remain, that are rea- " dy to die : for I have not found thy works perfect be- " fore God. Remember therefore how thou hast recei- " ved and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If there- " fore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a " *thief*, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come " *upon thee*. Lay these things to heart. Say, " O

" that it was with me as in months past!" Carry thy case to the scriptures; to the cross of Christ; to the throne of grace; and pray—" create in me a clean heart, " and renew a right spirit within me—restore unto me " the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy " free spirit.—Open thou my lips, and my mouth shall " shew forth thy praise.—Wilt thou not revive us " again, that thy people may rejoice in thee? Shew us " thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation."

Secondly. The words will apply to those who promised fair in their youth, and are now become irreligious. Many a fine morning has been overspread with clouds, and followed by rain: many a tree in spring has been covered with blossoms, which have never settled into fruit. And thus it has been with many a youth who has discovered amiable and pious properties. Thus it was with the young man who came to our Lord as an humble inquirer, concerning eternal life: it is said *when Jesus saw him he loved him.* Thus Joash was remarkable for early goodness, and was preserved in it during the life-time of the good man Jehoiada, but upon the death of his guardian, he was drawn aside by evil company and council. And from this and various other causes, there are many young persons in the same condition now.

Perhaps you say—" but we are not vicious and prof- " ligate." I am glad to hear it; and O! that this was true of all! But alas, we have swearers now, who in their youth, feared an oath,—We have sabbath-breakers now, who in their youth revered the sacred hours.—We have sceptics, and scoffers now, who from a child knew and admired the scriptures, which are able to make us wise unto salvation.—You say " we are not like them." But they were not thus drawn aside all at once; they became wicked by degrees. This is always the course of sin. They " proceed from evil to " evil: they wax worse and worse." The way to hell is down hill; once in motion, it is easy to go on, and *you know not* when or where you shall stop. You say,

" we are not like them."—But let me, my dear young friends ask you—are you not much less piously inclined than you once were ? Have you not exchanged a lovely teachableness of mind, for conceit and self-sufficiency ? a tenderness of conscience for an insensibility of mind, which the word can seldom move ? Have you not dropped private prayer ? Have you not lost much of your veneration for the pious and the good ? Cannot you trifle with what once made you tremble ? Are you not beginning to walk in *the council of the ungodly :* to stand *in the way of sinners ;* to sit in the *seat of the scornful ?*

Ah, had you proceeded in the good course in which you were once engaged, ere now, you might have been far advanced, and established ; ere now, actions would have produced habits, and habits have yielded pleasure. What can be more distressing, than your declensions from the good ways of God, to you pious friends, to your godly minister. O how does it grieve them to see you breaking over the barriers of a good education, and resolving that the prayers, and tears, and vows of your connections shall be all in vain. Ministers viewing you with hopeful pleasure as they buried the aged and the honorable, were saying—well, others are coming forward, and will be the pillars of our bereaved churches : " instead of the fathers shall be the chil- " dren." Your parents were beginning to say to each other—we shall soon be laid low in the dust—but these our loved offspring, shall be a seed to serve him. Now a death has spread over all their hopes !—especially when they reflect, that—you are likely to go greater lengths in error and wickedness than others ; and that you will be reclaimed with much more difficulty than those who never did such *despite to the spirit of grace.*—

But Thirdly, there are some who in their early days are truly devoted to the service and glory of God. To you, my dear young friends the words are applicable—not in a way of reproach, but honor—not in a way *of rebuke, but* encouragement. And what we wish you

to observe is this—that early piety is peculiarly acceptable to the God of your lives and mercies. He takes it kind—O wonderful condescension! O touching motive!—he takes it "kind: I remember thee, the kind-"ness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when "thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land "that was not sown."

You are forsaking the world, and willing to follow him whithersoever he goeth. *You* are pressing through a thousand allurements and seductions to reach him, and to say, kneeling at his footstool, "whom have I in "heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I "desire beside thee." *You* give him the first-born of your days, the first fruits of your reason and affections —And I say again—he takes it kind—"I love them "that love me, and they that seek me early shall find "me." He will guide you with his council, and afterwards receive you to glory. Should life be spared to a late period, it will only extend your course of usefulness, and with pleasure you will look back upon a life of mercy, and grace, of communion with him, and dedication to him. Found in the way of righteousness, he will view your hoary head *as a crown of glory.* When the days *come* in which many will say, *we have no pleasure*, it shall be otherwise with you. Under the decays of nature, and the loss of friends of which time has robbed you; when every thing earthly has become distasteful; and you are made to "possess months of "vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed unto you" —with humble boldness you may plead "cast me not "off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my "strength faileth. O God, thou hast taught me from "my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy won-"drous works. Now also when I am old and grey-"headed, O God, forsake me not: until I have shew-"ed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power "to every one that is to come." And he will answer you: "even to your old age I am he: and even to

" hoary hairs will I carry you : I have made, and I will " bear : even I will carry, and will deliver you.

" I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the " love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me " in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown." Amen.

DISCOURSE. XXVII.

THE MISERY OF CONTENDING WITH GOD.

Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker.—Isaiah xlv. 9.

THE life of man is held forth by various images; and it is worthy of our observation that they will apply equally to the righteous and to the wicked. For instance.

The christian is a traveller—and so is the sinner: only the one is journeying to heaven and the other to hell.

The christian is an husbandman—so is the sinner: both sow; only the one "sows to the flesh and shall "of the flesh reap corruption; while the other sows to "the spirit, and shall of the spirit reap life everlasting."

The christian is a soldier, and we read in the scripture of his commander, his enemies, and his arms; of his *fightings without*, and of *his fears within;* of his toil and of his triumph.—But if the life of the christian be a warfare, so is the life of the sinner: but there is this difference between them. The one wages a good warfare, and is crowned with glory, and honor—the other is engaged in a cause the most infamous, and covers himself with shame and confusion. The one is sure of victory—the other is certain of defeat. The one fights for God—but the other against him—and—"woe unto him that striveth with his Maker."

Let us first, mention some instances in which the sinner *strives with God.* And, secondly, consider *the woe which his* opposition necessarily entails upon him.

And, O! let me beseech you this evening to hear, not only with seriousness, but with self-application, that while I am endeavoring to lay open the *crime*, and the *curse*, you may individually ask yourselves in the presence of God, whether you are chargeable with the one, in order to determine whether you are exposed to the other.

First, let me specify some instances in which the sinner may be considered as striving with God. And here I hardly think it worth while to mention atheism, which opposes his very being, and tries to banish him from the world which he has made. Some indeed have supposed that a speculative atheist is an impossibility. I have often thought, that if such a monster *can* be found, he is to be found, not in a heathen, but in a christian country. How far God may give up a man *to strong delusion to believe a lie*, who has despised and rejected the advantages of revelation, it is not for us to determine—but "if the light that is in thee be darkness, how "great is that darkness!"

It is undeniable however that we have a multitude of practical atheists—that is; we have thousands who live precisely as they would do if they believed there was no God; and are no more influenced by his presence and perfections, than if they were persuaded the scripture was *a cunningly devised fable*. Yea, they not only live *without God in the world*, but they live against him? wherein?

First, they strive with him by transgressing his holy and righteous law. And this is done, not only by the commission of those sins which it forbids, but also by the omission of those duties which it enjoins. The man that does not love his neighbor, and strive to do him good, is therefore criminal, as well as the man who robs and oppresses him. This law is also broken by the desires of the heart as well as by the actions of the life; it is so spiritual as to apprehend murder in angry *words, and* adultery in wanton looks. Now every instance of disobedience is a contention with God; a da-

ring struggle to determine whether we shall be governed by his will, or by our own.

Secondly, the sinner strives with God, by opposing the gospel. The gospel is a scheme of mercy designed to glorify God in the salvation of man, and is made known *for the obedience of faith*. It calls us to repentance. It calls us to renounce our own righteousness. It calls us to flee for refuge to the Saviour of sinners. If therefore we go on in our impenetency; if we endeavor to establish our own righteousness and save ourselves; if we endeavor to build a shelter, instead of repairing to the only refuge provided—we are striving with God. In the gospel, God says, *come and let us reason together*; but the sinner says, "depart from us, "we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." The language of the gospel, as a token of willing submission is, *kiss the son*—the language of the sinner is, "we will "not have this man to reign over us." The language of the gospel is "go and wash in Jordon seven times; "and be clean"—the language of the sinner is, "are not "Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than "all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them and "be clean?" No. And the reason is, that your cure can only come from God, and he has determined to save you in his own way: he has revealed only one remedy; to this the promise is made; to this he requires you to submit: and if you refuse this method, and think of becoming your own physician, you are at variance with God. And even after persons have some serious concern about their souls, they find it no easy thing to yield up themselves unreservedly to this sovereign plan? Such is the pride of reason, and the force of legality; such a difficulty is there in relinquishing all apprehension of some worthiness, and strength of their own; and such a disposition have they to make themselves better before they rely on the Saviour—that they are often detained long in opposing this gracious scheme, till increasing conviction compels them to acquiesce. And though the force of it be broken, something of the

old leaven remains in the people of God all through life.

Thirdly, the sinner strives with God by violating the dictates of conscience. Conscience is God in man. And how often, and how faithfully has it addressed you? "O do not that abominable thing that I hate" —and yet, you did it. "Abandon that vicious course; "its steps take hold on hell"—and yet, you pressed forward. "Beware of that irreligious connection; "evil communications corrupt good manners: a com- "panion of fools shall be destroyed"—and yet, you complied with their enticements. And O! what labor have you had to lull conscience asleep, that you may steal forth and pursue your iniquities undisturbed! How hard have you often found it, to subdue the uneasiness which have sprung from its reproaches and condemnation! And sometimes in struggling with you alone, has it not been ready to gain the victory, till you went forth, and called in to your assistance, your comrades, and your dissipations; and thus rallied and reinforced, have renewed the contest, and again "done "despite unto the spirit of grace?"

Fourthly, the sinner strives with God, by refusing to resign himself to the dispensations of his providence.

By various blessings and indulgences in his person, in his family, or in his business, God would attach his heart to himself. Hence the apostle says, "that the "goodness of God leadeth to repentance:" it ought to do so; it is the design and the tendency of it—But the sinner frustrates this design and tendency—yea, he does more—he turns it into an encouragement to sin; he is evil because God is good; and the mercies which should serve as so many *cords of love* to draw him to God, he employs as so many weapons of rebellion against him! "Because sentence against an evil work "is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the "sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. Let fa- "vor be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn "*righteousness*: in the land of uprightness will he

" deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the " Lord."

God tries other means. He sends a succession of disappointments and afflictions. These are designed to wean him from the world—but *he holds fast deceit, he refuses to return.* They are *to hedge up his way with thorns*—but he breaks through them, and wanders on. By these, God arms himself to awaken his fears, and drive him back—but "he rushes upon the thick " bosses of his buckler." God strikes—and he strikes again!! "O Lord, are not thine eyes upon the truth? " thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; " thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to " receive correction: they have made their faces har- " der than a rock: they have refused to return."

He fixes the bounds of our habitations, arranges all our affairs, and leaves nothing to chance. And upon this principle, we "should learn in whatsoever state we " are, therewith to be content." For God cannot err. But the sinner murmurs and complains: he quarrels with the allotments of providence; he wishes to rectify the divine proceedings—God has not properly disposed of him or of others—and the common complaint is, that God has placed him too low, and others too high; indulged him too little, and others too much.

Again, the sinner strives with God by the persecution of his people. For such is the intimate and inseparable union between him and his followers, that in whatever degree you endeavor to injure them, you oppose him: he considers it as done against himself: " for he that toucheth them, toucheth the apple of his " eye." Therefore said our Lord and Saviour, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou* ME?

Finally, he strives with God, by trying to hinder the spread of his cause. He, who by fraud, or force, would keep the gospel from entering a neighborhood, or by reproach or threatening, would discourage people from hearing it; is in avowed opposition to the revealed will of God, "who will have all men to be saved, and to

" come unto the knowledge of the truth." Persons may endeavor to justify their opposition in some cases, because those who are laboring to do good, are not of their community, and *walk not with them*—but surely it becomes them to be exceedingly cautious in their conclusion; and to weigh the admonition of Gamaliel; " refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if " this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to " nought: but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it: " lest haply ye be found even to fight against God."

And be it remembered, that men will be judged, not according to their success, but according to their intention. God may overrule their rage for good, and make all their efforts to subserve the cause they oppose —but as this was not their design, it will not exculpate them. It was *in their heart* to prevent the diffusion of truth, and the influence of the gospel, and God deals with them accordingly. He *looketh to the heart;* and will punish them in proportion to the good they would have hindered, and the evil they would have spared had they been successful. For *woe unto him that striveth with his Maker.*

And to come to the second part of our subject, no wonder such a woe is here denounced—for this striving with God, is,

First, a practice the most *shameful and ungrateful.* What would you think of a child who should strive with his father, reproach his character, counteract all his designs, and endeavor to injure his concerns?— But such is your conduct towards God. " Is not he " thy Father, that hath made thee?" What would you think of a person who would set himself against a benefactor that had never given him the least grounds of provocation, and had always been doing him good? But such is your conduct towards God. He has preserved your souls in life. His air you have breathed. From his table you have been fed. He has given you *all things richly* to enjoy.

Has he not therefore reason to be astonished at your

baseness and ingratitude? "Hear, O heavens; and "give ear, O earth: for the Lord have spoken: I "have nourished and brought up children, and they "have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his own- "er, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not "know, my people doth not consider."

It is secondly, a practice the *most unreasonable and absurd.* For observe—in all the instances in which you oppose him he is aiming to promote your good: his design is to make you wise, to make you holy, to make you happy: and the advantages of compliance will be all your own. Besides—

Can you do without him?—Can you do without him in life?—In death can you do without him? Who else can pardon you? or sanctify you? or comfort you? or give you an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour. What then can equal the folly of offending and provoking Him whose favor is life, and upon whom you absolutely depend for every thing essential to your happiness in time and eternity?

And therefore, thirdly, nothing can be more *injurious and ruinous.* In striving with him you only resemble the wave that dashes against the rock, and is driven back in foam: or the ox that kicks against the goad, and only wounds himself; or the thorns and briars that should set themselves in battle array against the fire. Hence says God, "Let the potsherds strive "with the potsherds of the earth: if you will contend, "chuse an enemy like yourselves, with whom you may "claim some kind of equality—there is none between "you and me." There are cases in which it may be proper to wage war, where there is only a probability, or even a possibility of victory. But what desperate madness actuates *you? You* strive with an adversary by whom you know you must be conquered. For "have you an arm like God, or can you thunder with "a voice like his?" Need you be told that he can *work immediately* upon the mind, and in the twink-

of an eye, could produce such terrors in thy conscience, as would be intolerable? Need you be told that he is able to destroy both body and soul in hell? Need you be told that all creatures from an angel to a worm are under his controul, and only wait his signal to fall upon you?

This you say, only shews what he *can* do. Let us then see what he *will* do. What has he said? Read these threatenings. "If ye walk contrary to me, I also "will walk contrary to you, and will punish you seven "times for your iniquity.—He shall be revealed from "heaven with his mighty angels. In flaming fire, ta- "king vengeance on them that know not God, and "that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: "who shall be punished with everlasting destruction "from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of "his power. And Enock also the seventh from Ad- "am, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord "cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute "judgment upon all, and to convince all that are un- "godly among them, of all their ungodly deeds which "they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard "speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against "him."

"But what reason have we to believe that all this is "true?"—Because it is found in a book written by God himself. Because many of these threatenings have already been accomplished. Because it accords with those evils and miseries which are found to at- tend wickedness, even in this world. And because no one ever hardened himself against God, and prospered. Did Pharaoh? Did Belshazzer? Did the Jews?

To improve this awful subject let me ask—whether you are for God or against him? Be not surprised—you are either his friends or his enemies: there is no neutrality here. In some cases neutrality is allowable, if not commendable. In family disputes, or in quar- *rels among* neighbors, it may be proper to stand neu- ter. *If* we can do no good, we shall do no harm, and

this is often a considerable point. In the senate of a nation a member may wave his vote; things may be balanced in his mind; and nothing for the time may cause either side of the question to preponderate. And it is the excellency of a representative to be of no party. Two nations may worry and consume each other, while a third however pressed, may remain neutral and save its wealth, and its subjects. But here—we repeat it—and it cannot be repeated too often; here, there is not, and there cannot be a state of indifference. "He "that is not for me is against me, and he that gather- "eth not with me scattereth abroad. No man can "serve two masters, for either he will hate the one, "and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, "and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and "mammon."

Are you then the enemies of God; and have you to this hour been striving with your Maker? O! let me admonish you. Let me address you in the words of Eliphaz to Job: "acquaint now thyself with him, and "be at peace, thereby good shall come unto thee." Let me urge you in the language of the apostle Peter: "humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, "and he will exalt you in due time." If you are willing to return, be not discouraged. Behold him stretching forth the golden sceptre, saying, touch and live; "I will be merciful to the unrighteous, and thy sins and "iniquities will I remember no more. He is in Christ, "reconciling the world unto himself not imputing their "trespasses unto them." He has established *a ministry of reconciliation*, and sends forth his ambassadors to *beseech* you to be reconciled unto God. How wonderful that he should not wait to be solicited, but make the proposal himself, and beseech us to accept of it! Will not such love prevail? Do you still harbor doubts in your minds which keep you from him? Let me if possible dispel them by another illustration—for till your hope be excited, it is in vain to expect your return. A King may justly punish rebels; but suppose

from his clemency he has issued a proclamation assuring them, that whoever within a given period will come in and give up his arms, shall be pardoned and released?—What would you think of this prince if, as soon as one of these rebellious subjects entered his presence, to claim the privilege, he should have him immediately hanged!—But you say—surely he never could do this: his honor, would be at stake. Though he was originally under no obligation to save him, he is now; for he has bound himself by his word. And can God deny himself?—Venture then upon his promise. Go to him with weeping and supplication, and say, "O Lord, other lords besides thee have had do-"minion over us: but by thee only will we make men-"tion of thy name." But remember, you have no time to lose—the season of allowed submission is fixed, and will soon elapse. "Agree with thine adversa-"ry quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him: lest "at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, "and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be "cast into prison."

Happy those who have dropped the unrighteous struggle, and are now one with God. The enmity of your heart has been slain; the weapons of your rebellion have been thrown down, and many a tear shed upon them.—Be as zealous for him as you have been against him. He has done much for you; and you have much to do for him. Rise up for him against the evil doers, and stand up for him against the workers of iniquity. Redeem for him the time which you have lost. Honor him with your substance. Employ in his service, every power you possess, and every blessing you enjoy. Whether you live, live unto the Lord; or whether you die, die unto the Lord; so that living or dying, you may be the Lord's.

To conclude. We have been speaking of a striving with God, which is unlawful and destructive—but there is a striving with him which is allowable and necessary. *It is by prayer* and supplication. Such was the strife

of the woman of Canaan under the several discouragements she at first received, to try her fervency, and her faith. *Let me alone*, said God to Moses: Moses was striving with him in prayer, for the preservation of the Israelites; and God speaks as if he could do nothing against prayer. *Let me go;* said the angel to Jacob; Jacob was wrestling him; and "he said, I will not let "thee go, except thou bless me. And he blessed him "there."

And when Providence seems to oppose the promise: when experience seems to disagree with the word; when we are exercised with delays and rebukes too—then to persevere—to pray, and not faint—this will be found nothing less than a wrestling with God. But this is a holy violence; this is a pleasing resistance: and in this strife we are sure to prevail. He never said to the seed of Jacob, seek ye me in vain. "Wait "on the Lord; be of good courage, and he shall "strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord."

DISCOURSE XXVIII.

COMMUNION WITH THE SAVIOUR, INSEPARABLE FROM HOLINESS.

If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.—John xiii. 8.

IF the most minute circumstances in the lives of illustrious characters be perused with eagerness and pleasure—surely we can never feel indifferent to any part of the history of our Lord and Saviour.—He was fairer than the children of men. He was higher than the kings of the earth. All he did was wise and good; and we are concerned in all.

Observe the transaction to which the words before us refer—

—"Jesus knowing that the Father had given all "things into his hands, and that he was come from God "and went to God: he riseth from supper"—Such a solemn preface raises a high degree of expectation. From such an introduction, who would not look for an illustrious display of his power and glory?

—But "he laid aside his garments; and took a tow-"el, and girded himself. After that he poureth water "into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, "and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was "girded. Then cometh he to Simon Peter; and Pe-"ter said unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?"—How much was all this in character with Peter!—He was strongly attached to his master, and deeply sensible of his own unworthiness; but forward and impetu-

ous; rash in action, and often speaking without due reflection. Therefore

"Jesus answered and said unto him, what I do, thou "knowest not now: but thou shalt know hereafter. "There is something more in this action than you are "aware of, and by and by you will perceive it." The intimation refers to the design of this washing, which was two-fold. First, exemplary—to enforce upon them condescension, humbleness of mind, brotherly kindness. And secondly, symbolical—to lead their minds impressively to things of a higher nature. What therefore was perhaps excusable in Peter before, became censurable now After such an intimation he should have implicitly acquiesced; instead of which, he saith, *thou shalt never wash my feet.* Upon which *Jesus answered him*, in plain and awful terms, "if I wash thee "not, thou hast no part with me." Though this declaration intends nothing less than the necessity of obedience in this instance, it surely comprehends much more. He therefore now does not mention the washing of his feet, but of himself; if I wash *thee* not. And the threatning—thou hast *no part with me*, seems too dreadful to be denounced against an unwillingness to comply with this ceremonial observance, which sprang from something good, as well as evil in the apostle; and was therefore a mixed action; a sin of infirmity. Besides, we know that our Saviour was accustomed to teach by facts, and imagery; to pass from the body to the mind; to ascend from particular hints, to general truths; and to express more than is immediately perceived, in order that it might be discovered by repeated meditation, or illustrated by subsequent events.

We deem these few words necessary to justify ourselves from the deserved reproach of those, who as they call it, are always *spiritualizing the scriptures*, and building important doctrines on historical circumstances, till the word of God becomes contemptible to the wise, and unintelligible to the simple; and seems to have no real and determinate sense left. It is high-

time that this trifling and mischievous mode of teaching, should be discountenanced and laid aside.

Let us hasten to consider, with all the seriousness the subject requires, THAT PURIFICATION WITHOUT WHICH ALL OUR HOPE OF AN INTEREST IN CHRIST IS VAIN. *If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.* Let us examine the condition—the dreadfulness—and the certainty of this exclusion from Christ.

I. The condition—*If I wash thee not.*

It reminds us that sin is of a defiling quality. When God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, it is said, they were *altogether become filthy.* Hence, we read of *the filthiness of flesh and spirit.* This evil has defiled all our powers and all our actions; all we possess, and all we enjoy; and while it pollutes us, it causes us also to pollute others. Men may palliate the evil of sin, but in the view of the Supreme Judge, it is unspeakably, vile, and hateful: "He is of purer "eyes than to behold iniquity." And when the sinner himself is convinced of sin, he sees it in the same light. As a discovery of the guilt of sin awakens his fear, so a perception of the impunity of it excites his aversion and disgust. He sees, he feels that he is unclean, and deservedly excluded from communion with all holy beings. He cries, *behold I am vile.* "Wherefore I ab-"hor myself, repenting in dust and ashes. He loathes "himself for all his abominations;" nor will he be perfectly reconciled to himself while any of the hateful defilement is found within him.

Now this enables us to determine what our Saviour means by washing us. It is the sanctification of our nature. It is what the apostle calls "the washing of "regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." As water removes defilement and restores to purity, so the influences of divine grace deliver us from sin, and make us truly holy. Hence we find it promised in a fulness and variety of expression, "then will I sprinkle "*clean water* upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all "*your filthiness*, and from all your idols will I cleanse

"you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new "spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the "stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an "heart of flesh, and I will put my spirit within you, and "cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep "my judgments and do them." We do not indeed mean to intimate that real christians are entirely freed from all sin here—for then who could lay claim to the character? Unmixed purity is the privilege of heaven: there alone shall we be "presented faultless before the "presence of his glory with exceeding joy." The greatest saints have now their infirmities; and groan being burdened. But let us remember, that though this work is completed in eternity, it is begun in time: that the true christian is the subject of a glorious change, not only as to his actions, but also as to his dispositions; that he is saved from the love of every sin, and the dominion of every sin; that there is no sin unknown, which he does not wish to discover; and no sin discovered which he does not resolve to destroy; and no sin which he resolves to destroy, but he strives, and labors to destroy—"plucking out, even a right eye, "or cutting off even a right hand; denying all ungod-"liness, and worldly lusts, and living soberly, right-"eously, and godly in the present world."

But how are we thus cleansed from our iniquities, and who has the honor of our deliverance? HE is the grand purifier: "his name is called Jesus, because he "saves his people from their sins." If *I* wash thee not —the work is his—and whatever means are used, they derive both their being and their efficacy from him. There is no other fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, than his dying wounds supplied. His *blood*, says the apostle, *cleanseth us from all sin. He loved us*, says the church, *and washed us from our sins in his own blood.*

Let us not look to him for justification only, but remember that he is *made of God unto us sanctification also; that he delivers us not only from the curse, but*

the pollution of sin; that he rescues us, not only from the burden of condemnation, but the bondage of corruption; and not only gives us the title to heaven, but produces in us the meetness for it—and *is all in all.* To induce you to seek after this state,

Consider, II. the dreadfulness of the exclusion—*thou hast no part with me.* "Thou hast no real interest in me; and thou canst have no reasonable expectations from me." There is something very tremendous in this.

Hear how the apostle Paul speaks of a privilege from which you are excluded. "But what things were gain "to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency "of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for "whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do "count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be "found in him, not having mine own righteousness, "which is of the law, but that which is through the "faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by "faith; that I may know him, and the power of his "resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any "means I might attain unto the resurrection of the "dead." The apostle was a good judge, and you here see that he infinitely preferred union with Christ to every thing else.—But you say, you are not like-minded. You do not thus value him: you prefer a thousand objects, to an interest in him—and therefore there seems nothing to you so very dreadful in this threatening.

But the question is—whether your judgment be a righteous one. A pearl is not the less precious because the swine tramples it under foot. A toy is not more valuable than a title to an estate, because an infant or an idiot may give it the preference.

And the question also is, whether you will always remain in the same opinion. Will the day of judgment, *think you, operate* no change in your sentiments? Will not the approach of death alter your conviction?

when all those things which now engage and amuse you, fail—will you want no better portion? If, while I am speaking a messenger from the *king of terrors* should seize you, and you were carred to your bed, and compelled to look backward upon your life, and forward to your doom—what could succour and relieve you?—Yea, if conscience was to fall upon you this moment, and the terrors of the Almighty troubled you; you would soon find the truth of Solomon's words, "the spirit of a man may sustain his in-"firmity? but a wounded spirit who can bear?"—And then what advantage could you derive from all your worldly possessions? they would be all physicians of no value; miserable comforters. Your relief could only come from another quarter—but from that quarter you are forbidden to hope.

If our Lord and Saviour was an unimportant character, your exclusion from him would not be so fatal—but the fact is that every thing you need is found in him, and to be derived only from him. Of what worth Christ is to us, is a question, says an old writer, which would non-plus all the saints on earth, and angels in heaven to answer. One thing we are certain of—that no being in the universe can fill his place, and do for us what he is able to do. And therefore, if he will have nothing to do with us, our case is indeed miserable and hopeless. We are wanderers without a guide: we are dying patients without a physician, or a remedy: we are exposed to the deluge, and have no ark. It matters not to whom we belong; if we had part with a king, he could not help us in our most important concerns—the concerns of the soul and eternity. He cannot give us the true riches. He cannot deliver us from the wrath to come. He cannot bless us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places. And what can we do without these? "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no "other name given under heaven among men, whereby we must be saved." And if we miss salvation, we are lost for ever. "And what is a man profited, if he should gain "the whole world, and lose his own soul, or what shall a "man give in exchange for his soul?"

To have no communion with him in whose favor is life; *to hear him* say, I have a family, but you are no part of it—*you are not* a child, nor even a servant; to hear him say,

have a plantation, but you are not in it—you are not a cedar, no, nor a shrub; to hear him say, I have in reserve for my followers, thrones of glory, rivers of pleasure, fulness of joy—but as for you—you—have "neither part nor lot in the "matter, for thy heart is not right in the sight of God"—If this be not dreadful, what is?

Especially when we add, that there is but one alternative—If you have no part with Christ and his people, you must have your portion with hypocrites and unbelievers, with the devil and his angels! You have already fixed your destiny; you have chosen the left hand: you are already mingling with the goats; you are walking the downward road—"As "for such as turn aside to their crooked ways, the Lord "will lead them forth with the workers of iniquity."

Who believes this? Let us then in the third place, see whether we cannot establish the certainty of this exclusion. There are two ways of proving this.

The one is by testimony. "And if you receive the wit-"ness of man, the witness of God is greater." And says not our Lord and Saviour, "if I wash thee not, thou hast no "part with me?" One declaration from him renders a thing as certain as a thousand—otherwise I could go on quoting scripture—and say—"they that are Christ's, have "crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts. If any "man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are pas-"sed away, and behold all things are become new. If any "man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." But where shall I end? "Know ye not that the unrighteous "shall not inherit the kingdom of God? be not deceived; "neither fornicaters, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor ef-"feminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor "thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor "extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."

—The other is reasoning from principles. Let us view the Saviour, with whom we hope to have communion for ever—But he is pure and holy; his person is pure; his kingdom is pure—pure are its joys, its services, and its company. If therefore we are not made pure and holy, we have *no likeness* to him, and were we in a state of union, such a *heterogeneous* mass of materials, would form a body like *the image of Nebuchadnezzar*, where the head was indeed of gold, the breast and arms of silver, and the inferior

parts of baser metal, down to the feet, which were part of iron and part of clay. Can this be a representation of the church of the living God. If Christ is the head, and christians are the body, let us remember, that the head and the body partake of the same nature: and that if Christ be the vine, and christians the branches, the vine and the branches partake of the very same qualities.

What intercourse can there be where nothing prevails but a contrariety of inclination, and an opposition of interest? "How can two walk together, except they be agreed? what "fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and "what communion hath light with darkness? and what "concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he "that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath "the temple of God with idols?

Indeed without this renovation, we should be wholly incapable of deriving happiness from our connection with him. Our being for ever in his presence, would only render us miserable; there would be nothing in the praises or in the pleasures of that sacred state to fulfil our desires, or to gratify our taste. Dismiss the bible, or suppose that God had expressed no determination to exclude *every thing that defileth* from the abodes of blessedness; in this view, the case would be the same as it now is; the happiness of an unrenewed sinner is impossible upon every principle. Wherever he may be placed, WHILE HE HAS SIN IN HIM, HE HAS HELL WITH HIM.

This train of reflection informs us first, how exceedingly those misunderstood the gospel, and delude their own souls, who expect to be *made partakers of Christ*, while they seek not to be sanctified by him.—"He was manifested to take away our sin. "He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all ini-"quity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of "good works." In this every real christian rejoices; the plan meets his wants and his wishes. He gladly embraces the Saviour in all his offices, and while he glories in his cross, submits to his sceptre. He seeks after a present salvation from sin, as well as a future deliverance from wrath; and the faith which pacifies his conscience, purifies his heart. But to look for comfort without holiness, is to separate what God has unalterably joined together. To depend upon Christ for pardon and acceptance, so as to encourage ourselves in sin, or reconcile ourselves to it is "a way which may seem right unto a man, but be as-"sured the end thereof are the paths of death."

We may, secondly, congratulate those who are made

from sin. You have "an inheritance among them that are "sanctified." Yea, you not only share with the saints, but also with the Saviour: you have part with Christ! you partake of his safety and his dignity. When he, who is your life shall appear, you shall also appear with him in glory. You shall sit with him upon his throne. You shall enter the joy of your Lord. If children then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.

Can you be poor?—Having nothing you possess all things. "For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Ce- "phas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things "to come: all are yours: and ye are Christ's; and Christ is "God's."

Can you be miserable? "Rejoice in the Lord always, and "again I say rejoice. If troubled on every side—you are not "distressed: if perplexed—you are not in despair: if persecu- "ted—you are not forsaken; and if cast down, you are not "destroyed."

And if you have part with him in his glory, can you be unwilling to share with him in his reproach? If you are to *live with him:* cannot you *die with him?* If you are to *reign with him,* cannot you also *suffer with him?*—According to the apostle, you ought to "rejoice; inasmuch as you are made partakers of "Christ's sufferings: that when his glory shall be revealed, "you may be glad also, with exceeding joy."

Thirdly. Are there any here whose desires are awakened; and who are asking, can I obtain a portion in Christ, and how is it to be obtained? Let me conclude by a word of direction, and encouragement. And it is this. From a deep conviction of your need of him, apply immediately to him. "Take with you words "which he, himself, has furnished, and say, Lord, take away all "iniquity. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse "me from my sin. Create in me a clean heart, O God: and re- "new a right spirit within me."

Exercise faith upon his power, and say, *Lord, if thou wilt, thou* CANST *make me clean.* Be persuaded of his willingness; believe that "he wanteth to be gracious, and is exalted to have "mercy upon you." What were those who are now so happy with him? They were once "far off: and children of wrath, "even as others." Behold, they all rise up and address you: "O taste and see that the Lord is good, blessed is the man that "trusteth in him. That which we have seen and heard, declare "we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us, and "truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Je- "sus Christ."

Above all, hear their Lord and Saviour saying, "him that "cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out!"

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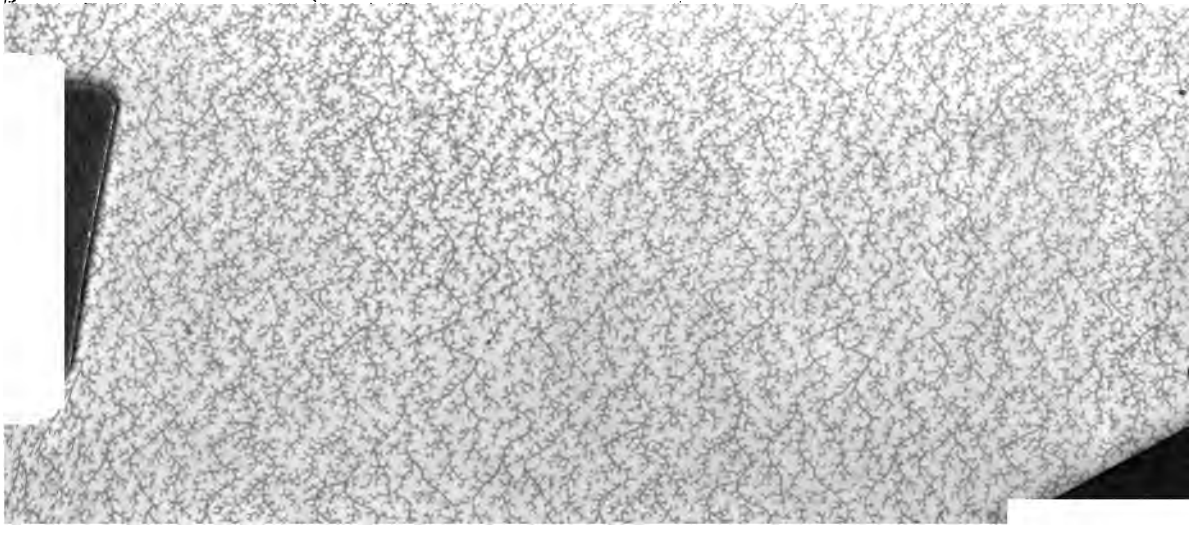
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